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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #0101 03/05/99

~ The Editor's Keyboard ~ Industry/Tech. News ~ JagFest '99!
~ People Are Talking! ~ Unabashed Atariophile ~ Linux Threat?
~ PlayStation 2 ~ Atari Computing #12 ~ New Tetris!
~ CompuServe Overhaul ~ Med. Records on Web? ~ Pentium 3?

-* Apple Intimidates Student! *-
-* Console Games Emulation Heats Up! *-
-* "Cyber Squatters" Surrender Domain Names *-

->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Welcome to our premiere issue of Atari Online News, Etc.! It's actually been a long-time coming that Joe Mirando and I got out from under the auspices of STReport and started our own magazine. We've rationalized over the years about whether or not to do this. I guess the turning point for both of us was that we wanted to "control" our own destiny with regard to an Atari online magazine. I think we both felt that there needed to be a new generation of Atari online magazines to take over the reins of those of yesteryear such as Z*Net, the original STR, and AEO.

While Atari and its "glory" years are long gone, the userbase still remains. Yes, that base has drastically dwindled, but the enthusiasm of those who remain is still high. Our goal with Atari Online News, Etc. (A-ONE) is to be a focal point for Atari users and fans to keep in touch with what's happening in our community on a regular basis. At the same time, we'll keep you abreast of the console gaming world as well as news surrounding the rest of the computer technology world.

Joe and I are very enthusiastic about this new endeavor. And from the incredible response to the recent press release we've received so far, you're equally excited.

So what do we have planned for the future? Well, a lot of ideas have been coming to us. Joe Mirando's "People Are Talking" column will continue in A-ONE. Michael Burkley's "The Unabashed Atariophile" column is coming out of retirement! You say you want guest columnists? You got 'em! Where are the Atari dealers? We'll keep you informed. How about interesting Atari-related Internet sites, newsgroups, software, developers, user groups, online services, etc.? It's all being compiled; and we hope that you'll play an active role in a lot of it!

And while we're going to remain true to our text-based roots with A-ONE, we realize that some of our readers will want to read us online. Well, we're also working on an HTML version. We'll have our own web pages to either read A-ONE while online, or download for reading at your leisure. We're looking into our own web domain and site to archive past issues and other exciting items. We have an interactive presence in the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi - accessible by Atari telecommunications software, telnet, or via the web. The Atari Advantage Forum has a message forum, software libraries (text side), and chat services. The Atari Advantage Forum has been a lot of fun over the years; and we feel that it will continue and grow along with Delphi. Please feel free to join in on the enjoyment. Delphi provides free access via the Internet. Just set your browser (CAB works if your version supports Java!) to:

http://forums.delphi.com/m/main.asp?sigdir=atari

If/when you get the Delphi log-in page, either type in your Delphi username and password, _or_ select the sign up for free membership option and follow the prompts. Once you're in the Atari Advantage, let us know!

In the coming weeks, we'll update you on the goings-on there, as well as other online sites.

It's going to be a fun ride here at A-ONE; we hope that you're ready and willing to join in with us. Again, welcome to our first issue of Atari Online News, Etc. - thanks for celebrating with us!

Until next time...

-Dana

From CompuServe’s Club Forum:

News Flash:

THE FORUM WILL BE CLOSED (NO ACCESS) ON THURSDAY, 2/18/99, AT 9 A.M. IT WILL RE-OPEN AT APPROXIMATELY 12 NOON. WHEN IT DOES RE-OPEN, ASCII ACCESS WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE, AS THE FORUM WILL HAVE BEEN CONVERTED TO NISA (32-BIT) FORMAT. THE TYPE OF SOFTWARE REQUIRED TO ACCESS THE FORUM IS LISTED IN THE PARAGRAPH BELOW. I AM NOT CERTAIN WHETHER A xxxCIM TYPE OF PROGRAM WILL WORK OR NOT? IF IT DOES NOT, THOSE LISTED BELOW WILL. Hope you are able to cross over with us!

FORUM CONVERSION IS AT HAND!

Computer Club Forum is "tentatively" scheduled to be converted to NISA (non-ASCII)format on Thursday, 2/18/99. Once completed it no longer will be possible to access this forum with an ASCII interface program. You will need a program like TAPCIS, OZWIN or CSURFER to be able to use the forum. Such programs require a dos box to run.

I realize this will create a hardship, if not an outright impossibility, for some of you in terms of access. I sincerely regret this circumstance. Unfortunately, the decision was out of my hands, and delayed as long as possible (our original forum conversion date was 9/30/98).

To those of you whom regrettably may be never heard from again, we do bid you a fond farewell, thank you wholeheartedly for you participation here over the years and want you to know you will not be forgotten (Hey,there is still E-Mail for contact).

To those of you crossing over to the other side with us, we shall be eagerly awaiting your arrival, and ask for your patience while the dust settles and we work out the kinks. Hopefully, CLUB Forum will be able to continue to serve you and expand our offerings in the process.

WIZop-Dave, Lee Lightfoot, P.J. Herrington, Rob F. and da’ Merc

FORUM CONVERSION "DEFINITELY" SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY, 2/18/99

[Editor’s note: it’s no longer "tentative" - the Computer Club Forum, the last CIS vestige for Atari users to congregate, has changed over to HMI format]

ATARI COMPUTING #12 - OUT NOW!

From: Mike Kerslake <publish@cix.co.uk>

ATARI COMPUTING MAGAZINE #12

The latest issue of AC has just been published and subscribers should get their copies shortly.

AC#12 includes the following:

HARDWARE REVIEWS
Centurbo II
Jam PRO/FAD
FEATURES
Virtual reality
ACC 98 report and photos
Digital Cameras
MUSIC
Easybeat
Steinberg Pro 24 II
Digital Home Studio
SOFTWARE
NVDI 5
CD Writer
ObjectGEM
Joe HTML Editor
Plus reviews of ExtenDOS Gold, CD/DAT clock, RSCView, Finder, Ghostscript and HTML-Export.

In addition there are all the usual regulars and features such as the DA Layout tutorial and those pages from the Maggie Boys!

64 X A4 pages of Atari news and information.

AC is available on direct subscription from the publishers or via our agents in the USA, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Australia, Nederlands and New Zealand.

Please see our web site for full information or email us direct (see sig file below).

*** Atari Computing Magazine information ***
Email: admin@ataricomputing.com - WWW: http://www.ataricomputing.com

->In This Week's Gaming Section - JagFest '99!! "Silent Hill"!
Bushnell to Speak at CG Expo '99!
Game Emulators Back Down!
"Tetris '99"!! And much more!!

->From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

Welcome again to A-ONE! Obviously (I hope!), this is the gaming section of Atari Online News, Etc. It's here where we'll focus primarily on console gaming news and related topics. We're willing to

cover ground ranging from the grand-daddy of them all: the Atari 2600 to the 'Blackbird', and beyond. We're hoping that you'll join in with us by sending us announcements, news items, reviews, commentary, Top-10 lists, etc. that you feel our readers would enjoy hearing about. We're really looking forward to hearing from you.

In the meantime, we have a lot of gaming news for you this week, so drop into that easy chair and enjoy.

Until next time...

->From the Other Editor's Desk

Joe Mirando, Managing Editor
jmirando@portone.com

Hi there fellow Atari users. I'd first like to say that you don't have to worry about a full-blown editorial from me every week. This is just a short letter to tell you a little bit about why I'm now a part of A-ONE Magazine and why I think you'll like what we have planned.

Do you remember the scene in CITIZEN KANE when Charles Foster Kane wrote his "Readers' Bill of Rights"? Well, that's sort of what I'm doing here. Only I'll try to be less grandiose and more mindful of the intent behind the words.

Since many Atari users are quite happy with their computers and don't care about PCs, Intel, or Microsoft, our main focus will always be Atari computers. And because there is other technology out there, we'll do our best to keep you up-to-date on all those new bells and whistles so you'll know what's going on out there.

Just like our respective offerings in STReport, our offerings here will be centered around what you want to see in an online magazine. After all, whether this magazine succeeds or fails will be determined by you. And believe me, we want to succeed. We firmly believe in giving you the information you can use and leaving the rest up to you. Your choice of computers is exactly that: Your choice. We respect that, and hope that the sentiment shows through in every issue we publish.

We are also in the process of lining up features, reviews, and columns that we think you'll enjoy. I'm sure that Dana has already mentioned several of the goodies that we're planning, and there will surely be more as we get this venture up and running, but I'd also like to mention things like reviews of the state-of-the-art in the Atari world. Commercial programs like NVDI, ExtenDOS, HD Driver, MagiC, and CAB are right at the top of the list.

We are looking into setting up our own website (www.a-one.com has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?) but until we get our legs under us a bit more, you'll be able to find the latest issue of A-ONE on my webpages (http://www.portone.com/jmirando/a_one) in addition to the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi and through the email subscription list.

As always, feel free to drop us a line to let us know what you think of

the magazine so far and what you'd like to see in the future. I promise you, we'll be happy to hear from you.

Well since I promised to make this brief I'll sign off now and let you get to the good stuff.

Keep on readin',

Joe

-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-=-

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Isn't this just like old times? You've no doubt already read our editorials, so I'm not going to lay any more on you this week. Suffice it to say that A-ONE is an idea who's time has come... again, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

The mini-vacation we took between writing for STReport and starting A-ONE was a much needed break, and Dana and I put the time to good use by hammering out the basic concept of what this magazine is going to be about. I don't mean Atari computers. Heck, THAT part was fairly obvious even to me. What I mean is the tone and attitude that the magazine is going to take on. You see, not being in the Intel/Microsoft arena, we don't have to worry about competition or ticking off the wrong people. Since we all use Atari computers, we're ALL the wrong people. <grin> The bottom line is that you can expect this column to remain just as it's always been: info from the UseNet mixed with my free-association and rambling. Isn't it refreshing to know that some things never change??

Okay, let's take a look at what's going on around the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Galen (The head YACcer) posts:

"I know that I've seen this here on comp.sys.atari.st a dozen times, but I've forgotten: How do you stop the $#%& mooing cow in CAB 2.5? I just locks up and moos at me.

To clarify, what is occurring is that the moo is looping and the computer is not responding to keyboard/mouse input. Effectively a lockup.

I'm using a stock 14 Mb C-LAB Falcon with Geneva/Neodesk. I've been using CAB only as an HTML reader up till now (since I often am online after work at my worksite -- do love those ISDN lines), but I need to get home-based WWW up and running shortly.

Kenneth Medin tells Galen:

"Actually by pressing [Shift]+[Control] without any other keys Gemjing 1.30 stops. Works at least with Geneva+Neodesk."

When someone mentions CAB for the Macintosh and some of its abilities, Michael Freeman asks:

"They can do Java on iCAB because iCAB just needs to hook into the Java VM (virtual machine) which is supplied with MacOS v8+. The problem with Atari version of CAB is that a Java VM HAS NOT BEEN WRITTEN yet!!

Once a Java VM is written for Atari then CAB I'm sure will use it...

Until then I'll just have to borrow time on my Dads Mac to continue on my 'make myself more employable by learning Javascript' quest...(sigh!)"

Evans Winner posts:

"I'm sure these are all FAQs but I can't find the FAQ :-) If someone could point me to a FAQ I would be most grateful, If not, perhaps someone could help me out with these basic questions. Thanks.

I just picked up an Atari 1040 STf at the local thrift store for three bucks. It looks like it's in pretty sorry shape but I'd like to play around with it. Can anyone tell me what model numbers I need for a monitor at least? Also what OSs are available and does one get it? Also, what documentation is there?"

Chris Wilkinson tells Evans:

"Monitors that work with the STf are Atari's own SC1224, SC1435, SM124.

The SC1224 and SC1435 are colour monitors that use the STf's low and medium resolutions (low is 320x200 pixels, 16 colours from palette of 512) (medium is 640x200 pixels, 4 colours from palette of 512). The SM124 is a mono monitor and uses the ST's high resolution mode only (640x400 pixels, black and white only). Check local pawn shops etc...

Atari TOS (The Operating System) is pre-loaded in ROM. Thats a pretty frugal OS but it does the job...

Plenty of documentation exists on the net. Type 'Atari+ST' on any search engine and take your pick from the hundreds of resulting web pages found with such info on them..."

Hallvard Tangeraas tells Evans:

"First of all, get hold of the "Quick FAQ" which is available online at:

 http://quickfaq.atari.org

Or download the HTML and text, or just the text version from my site, so that you can read it without being online:

 ftp://ftp.sol.no/users/h/hallvart/atari/info/

In the same directory you'll also find the larger, older FAQs which might help as well.

Finally, take a look at my "Atari Launchpad" (URL in my signature below) where you'll find links to all of these plus lots of other Atari

websites, software, information etc..."

When someone asks:

"Is CAB 2.7 available in the US yet? (I'm a registered CAB 2.5 user who wants to upgrade)"

Someone else answers:

"Maybe. It is being advertised (just started), but I don't know if the software has actually arrived yet."

John Garone tells them:

"I got CAB 2.7 (English Version) from Systems For Tomorrow (USA)!"

Joe Villarreal tells us all:

"I've been using CAB 2.7 since early last month (January). Got the upgrade from Chro-Magic Software (USA)."

Paul Mac asks:

"Any ideas where a copy of diamond back can be obtained?"

Derek Hunt tells Paul:

"Michael White now owns both Diamond Back and Diamond Edge rights. He has announced a new version of Back shortly but not of Edge. Both are going to remain commercial but he has given no details as yet.

Email: michael@fastlane.net"

Ben Hills adds:

"You can buy Diamond Edge from Hisoft.

http://www.hisoft.co.uk

Take a look in the Atari Bargains section. You will find Diamond Edge (and Diamond Back) available for 15UKP each."

Nigel Williamson asks:

"Can anyone please tell me whether the msg: "CRC error, Incorrect DATA field checksum", obtained using "analyse floppy" in KnifeST can be due to the floppy disk drive heads being out of alignment rather than due to a fault in the floppy disk being examined."

Pera Putnik tells Nigel:

"I vote for floppy disk <smile>.

Serious: newer floppies are very bad quality. But if you have this problem often, it could be a problem with the drive, and not only heads out of alignment."

Neil Rougley tells Nigel:

"Years ago I used to get this error periodically with floppies used in my

Mega 2’’s external Atari drive (this based on what Disk Mechanic reported). From what I remember, looking at the floppy’s directory with DM’s editor, I’d always see a single random character in an unused section of the directory. Restoring that character to its normal ’unused’ value and resaving the track or sector (whatever it was) made the checksum match again, fixing an otherwise inaccessible disk. The random character obviously got inserted without the checksum being updated.

This plagued me for over two years, having rescued about 20 floppies in such a manner. Disk Mechanic was the only utility that saved my butt. Why it occurred on somewhat of a consistent basis I’ll never know."

John Whatty posts:

"I actually got my ST on the net !! I’m using Freeserve, Sting and CAB 1.5.

I am having problems with CAB crashing. To start with it crashed all the time, then yesterday it seemed to be working Ok, and now today, its crashing again. Any ideas?"

James Davies questions John:

"When does it crash? On Startup or when browsing?

CAB is not the most stable of applications. I just messed around with the loading order of the Auto folder and ACCs until it seemed to crash less. I also used the standard system font instead of any TrueType fonts."

Paul Nurminen tells John:

"It’s [CAB 1.5’’s] best feature is consistent crashing. Any later version (2.0 - 2.7) will be much more stable, fast, reliable, and much less likely to crash. I used 1.5 for a long time, and almost gave up on ever getting my Falcon on the web. But once I got 2.5 (commercial version), it was a whole new world. And now, I’m eagerly awaiting the arrival of my 2.7 upgrade."

Brian Van TIlborg adds:

"I am using CAB 1.5, Have been for about 1 year. I remember it crashing when I first started using it. But I believe 90% of it was me. I use TOS 1.0 and certain functions had to be compromised.

I have few problems with 1.5 although I use an OLDER overlay. I am currently using 1.2805.

Make certain you have VJC turned off in STing. Check out you CACHE for any suspect files. Zero bytes etc. Also if you are crashing A LOT DELETE the CACHE and start again.

I don’t use CAB 1.5 for Email (inconvenient) but I use NEWsie instead. If you have newer OS you will want to combine them.

I run Graphics on and use OUTLINE fonts (TRUE TYPE) and have No problems. I do have to be careful of the 40FOLDER bug with TOS<1.04.

Also, while CAB 1.5 has a trick that makes it able to work on Frame sites, (Some places you see just how useless part of the frame is as it

says advert.htm:-) and you can select each section of the frame to view one at a time. However I have discovered that some frame based pages, no longer work as they use different commands to the selected pages that 1.5 doesn't handle). Oh BIKENET what a crapper, since I used to go there with no problems.

Anyways, you can always try the CAB 2.7 demo and see how that works. And someone can tell me where to find it."

Dennis McGuire asks:

"What are the best FTP, Telnet, sound player and video player programs to support CAB that run on a Mega STe?"

Brian van Tilborg tells Dennis:

"When you say the BEST, you will get different answers, so I will tell you what I use on my ST.

FTP: NEWsie
Also does email, and NEWs, + rudimentary browser. However there are more flexible ftp programs available.

Telnet: Telstar
I use Peters (Rottengatter's)Telnet that can be found on his homepage. That is the STing author. I am assuming you are using STing with CAB and not Iconnect."

Sound and Video:
I would recommend MP_STE for AVIs,MOV and QT. Great if you are into South Park, even works on my MONO ST. If you want MPEG, you will have to USE 1ST guide, which does a multitude of functions. Sound, MPEGs and JPEGS. Also a good sound player is NPLAYER. I just downloaded it and it works very well. If you are in North America, you can register MP_STE with HOMA SYSTEMS. I believe MP_STE is at version 2.81 for the ST/e. MPlayer for the 68030 is at version 2.99 and now does Mpegs. Perhaps the ST may soon be able to do MPEGS with a little more speed."

Brian van Tillborg asks:

"Can someone explain to me what this HORRIBLE little program does, besides cause my ST to crash? It came with Magic and I see other programs require it. What does it do? And is there a program that does the same thing but is MORE reliable. I at first thought my problems were just a very unstable version of Magic. However after disabling WDialog, the crashing has been reduced to a minimum. Also is this program public domain? I have version 1.4 and I hear there is a version 2.0?"

Henk Robbers tells Brian:

"Wdialog gives new system calls of Magic away to non Magic users. It is not for use with Magic, but mainly for ASH programs you want to run without Magic. Do not use it as a hecap upgrade to newer Magic's. That's my experience.

I have V2.01 which I use with TT TOS. It came with NVDI 5, (not Magic 6) But it surely was intended to allow Magic 6 functions to be used by some NVDI utilities.

So there is a connection between Magic version and Wdialag version."

Louis Holleman adds:

"If I recall correctly, MagiC 6 has Wdialog functions built in, hence with v. 6 you don't need it any longer.

When I tested the Jinnee desktop (note that MagiC 6 wasn't available then) the docs said "running MagiC you don't need Wdialog, running TOS you do", but I needed to stick Wdialog into my auto folder before it worked. That's running MagiC 5.01...

I gathered NVDI needs it for certain printer functions, I can see cosmetic changes to alert boxes using Wdialog.

On my TT, MagiC 5.01 plus Wdialog 1.97 (I went back to this one because of bugs in 2.0 but meanwhile 2.01 or higher is out) is a ROCK solid OS. Auto folder sequence is essential though, one minor change and the solidness has gone. Reason to use an Autoexec.bat with MagiC."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next time... same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

The Unabashed Atariophile

by Michael R. Burkley
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It's good to be back! Over the years I've written for Z*Net, Atari Explorer Online, STReport, and more; and now I'm writing for A-ONE! But always, I've written as the Unabashed Atariophile, because that's what I am!

I've had one or more (generally many more!) Atari computers in my home since 1987. I started with a 520 ST with TOS on disk and now have a Cattamaran-equipped TT with the big-screen mono monitor (wonderful with Calamus!), two STE's (one with the T-25 accelerator chip in it), and several more STfm's and ST's. The STE and the TT find daily use with the rest set up in the basement for kids (and grown-ups) to use with several different MIDI based linked games.

I also have a Pentium II 266 MHz Windoz 95 based computer, but it's just not as nice as my Atari. I actually am using it right now to type this article, though GEMulator 98 and STeno make me feel right at home!

Dana is going to help me keep a regular schedule writing this article. Even though he's in Massachusetts and I'm in Niagara Falls, NY, I'm sure that he's going to threaten to throw some pies across the phone lines if I don't keep up! I wouldn't want that to happen as I'm trying to lose some weight. What I hope to do is to take you on a tour of different web sites filled with Atari software. There are still many Atari sites, generally kept up as a labor of love, that I frequently visit. I'll tell you about them. At the moment I

have about 600 meg of Atari PD and shareware software that I haven't cataloged and described. Writing this article will encourage me to do that! I'll share the fruit of that labor with you as well.

This is just a short "teaser" of an article. I would have written more, but I've been sick and out of it for the past three days, and I know that Dana wants the article now. That just leaves more for next time!

May God Bless!

Michael

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Game Emulators Proliferate Despite Legal Hurdles

New questions are being raised about the legality of video game emulation software which allows PC users to play programs designed exclusively for popular game consoles.

Dozens of Web sites now offer PC users software to play games originally created for dedicated game machines from Atari, Sega Genesis and the Nintendo NES. Historically, these programs have allowed game enthusiasts to play older titles which were popular on systems no longer being sold. But recently game emulators have been designed to allow PC users to play new titles for the proprietary consoles sold by leading developers like Sony and Nintendo.

Along with the new generation of emulators have come a slew of new legal issues. Sony filed suit against developer Connectix Corp. last month when that company rolled out its Virtual Game Station which lets Macintosh computer users play many games designed for Sony's PlayStation console. While a California court has denied Sony's request for a restraining order against the product, the overall case awaits a formal hearing.

Another emulator causing waves is the UltraHLE (Ultra High Level Emulator) program which lets PC users play games made for the Nintendo 64 system and has been offered over the Internet at several free download sites. For its part, Nintendo is not pleased with the program. Spokesmen for the company said the firm is considering different options to stop UltraHLE's distributors, including legal action.

UltraHLE was created by two independent programmers who identify themselves as Reality Man and Epsilon.

One major difference between the two emulators is that the Virtual Game Station uses PlayStation games which are distributed on common CD-ROM technology while UltraHLE plays titles which were designed for use in Nintendo's proprietary cassette architecture.

Thursday a programmer called GossiTheDog posted the source code for

UltraHLE at his World of Emulation Web site and called for an open source model for distribution and furthering of the gaming platform. But even this community-oriented approach was tendered with caution as it is becoming clear that the console vendors aren't going to remain silent about emulators.

"I've decided to make my efforts of converting UltraHLE to C++ public," writes GossiTheDog. "The problem is, what legal position does this put me in? To be honest, I'm not sure."

"Another question is; will this hurt or benefit the emulation scene?" said GossiTheDog. "This is up to you. Make trojans with my source code and you'll only end up hurting yourself. Make improvements and conversions to Linux etc and you'll keep UltraHLE alive."

In order to protect himself from possible retribution from Nintendo, the programmer has posted a near-complete version of UltraHLE at the site. In order to execute the program a user must know how to complete the file so that it will compile.

Connectix, meanwhile, continues to compete with Sony for the huge market of people who buy video games made by independent developers.

"Virtual Game Station gives Macintosh owners more games to choose from and PlayStation owners more choice in where they play their games and we will continue to fight for the customer's right to this choice," said Roy McDonald, president and chief executive of Connectix. "We've offered this type of ability successfully and without controversy for years in the PC emulation market and intend to defend the consumer's right in the PlayStation market space as well."

Sony officials have yet to comment on the court's decision.

Connectix spokesmen reported that demand for the Game Station has been strong with the company fighting to keep up with a backlog of orders. The system was introduced to the public at the Macworld Expo in San Francisco during January and Connectix claims that it was able to sell over 3,000 units of the product over the course of the week-long conference.

Nintendo64 Emulator Disassembled

Feb 12, 1999 (Tech Web - CMP via COMTEX) -- As Nintendo continues to ponder what steps to take against developers of a PC-based Nintendo64 emulator, the source code to the emulator has been released on the Internet as freeware.

The emulator, written by two programmers who go by the nicknames Reality Man and Epsilon, was only available for a few hours on a website called Emulators Unlimited, which hosts almost two dozen emulators, mostly based on long-defunct platforms like the Atari 2600 and Commodore Amiga.

The emulator, called Ultra High Level Emulator, or UltraHLE for short, acts as the "console." To play the games, the game code has to be "ripped" from the cartridge and loaded onto the PC. The hardware used to rip the N64 cartridges is sold illegally on the Internet, and

trading of the games is considered copyright infringement.

Even though UltraHLE was only online for a few hours, hundreds of people downloaded it. It is available on other sites in addition to Emulators Unlimited.

UltraHLE is not the first Nintendo64 emulator. Emulators Unlimited hosts five Nintendo64 emulators, EmuUnlim64, Nemu64, NINCEST, Project Unreality, and Ultra64.

Nintendo is still thinking about what to do. "We are reviewing all of our legal options, one of which could be taking legal action," said Beth Llewelyn, a spokeswoman for Nintendo of America. UltraHLE, in Nintendo's view, does infringe on Nintendo's intellectual-property rights, but a final decision has not been reached, she said.

Stopping UltraHLE is going to be much more difficult now because the source code was released by a programmer who calls himself GossiTheDog. The code is actually the UltraHLE executable disassembled and partly converted to C++ code. The code does not compile in its current form, and part of the reason for releasing it was to get some help.

"I've decided to make my efforts of converting UltraHLE to C++ public," wrote GossiTheDog on his home page. "I want to make HLE Open Source, if possible. The problem is; what legal position does this put me in? To be honest, I'm not sure."

Nintendo Emulator Programmer Throws In The Towel

An emulation program designed to let PC users play video games created for the popular Nintendo 64 system is being called a fake.

UltraHLE, the name of the program, was posted on the Web last week by a programmer who wanted to distribute it through an open source platform. Since then, questions have arisen over the validity of the application. Various printed reports have indicated that the source code may be useless or not as substantial as it was reported to be. A story distributed by Wired Magazine said that some programmers believe that the file is not the source code for an emulator, but rather a reverse-engineering of the original Nintendo 64 application.

The programmer who posted UltraHLE told visitors to his Web site that media coverage of the availability of the program has made it impossible to continue distributing the application. Known only as "GossiTheDog," the individual griped openly about those who had led to the end of his plan.

"Unfortunately, I'm going to have to tell you that the UltraHLE OpenSource Project is being suspended," writes GossiTheDog. "It would appear that the world-wide press took too much of an interest in the subject, giving us far too much publicity before we were ready for it."

The programmer complained of receiving hundreds of e-mails and site visits in response to "unwanted press coverage." He also asked any Web sites that are offering the program to stop distributing it.

"I can not stress enough how truly annoyed I am at how people have

handled this," GossiTheDog writes. "If people had engaged their brains before writing, you would probably have seen a complete C++ source to UltraHLE released in several months, and Linux ports and such performed soon after. Instead, I am now suspending the project."

The programmer also denied posting UltraHLE to Dextrose, a popular emulator Web page.

Nintendo spokesmen said last week that the firm is considering a number of options in regard to different emulation programs, including taking legal action.

New questions are currently being raised about the legality of video game emulation software, which allows PC users to play programs designed for use with popular consoles.

A query on the term "emulator" at any Internet search engine returns pages of Web sites which offer PC users the ability to play games which were originally offered as retail products for game consoles like Atari, Sega Genesis and the Nintendo NES. Historically, these programs have allowed game enthusiasts to play older titles which were popular on systems no longer being sold by their developers. But recently a trend has emerged in which game emulators allow PC users to play new titles designed for the proprietary consoles sold by leading developers like Sony and Nintendo.

Along with the new generation emulators have come a slew of new legal issues generated by the console manufacturers themselves. Sony filed suit against developer Connectix Corp. last month when that company rolled out its Virtual Game Station emulator which lets Macintosh computer users play many games designed for Sony’s PlayStation console. While a California court has denied Sony’s request for a restraining order against the product, the overall case awaits a formal hearing.

One major difference between the two emulators is that the Virtual Game Station uses PlayStation games which are distributed on common CD-ROM technology while UltraHLE delivers titles which were designed for use in Nintendo’s proprietary cassette architecture.

Connectix officials continue to defend their company’s right to compete with Sony for the huge market of people who buy video games made by independent developers. Sony officials have yet to comment on the court’s decision.

Mo Vaughn Signs Deal for MLB 2000

989 Sports announced today that Mo Vaughn, All-Star first baseman of the Anaheim Angels, has signed an exclusive deal for MLB 2000 -- the latest version of the brand’s popular baseball videogame for the Playstation game console -- available in stores at the end of March 1999.

Vaughn will appear on MLB 2000 packaging and point of purchase signage, and has already participated in a motion capture and audio recording session, which incorporated his actual movements and sounds into the videogame. Vaughn also worked with 989 Sports’ developers to provide insight and counsel into the development of MLB 2000.

‘‘Mo’s rare triple threat talent and unprecedented reputation make him a great choice to grace the cover of MLB 2000," said Jeffrey Fox, vice president, marketing, 989 Studios. ‘‘We have worked closely with Mo to help make MLB 2000 the best-selling baseball game on the PlayStation."

Licensed by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, MLB 2000 features state-of-the-art 3D graphics, including actual player faces and batting stances; two-man commentary with legendary announcer Vin Scully and ESPN’s Dave Campbell; and expanded game play modes.

‘‘It’s been an incredible year for me, and to top it off, I am now privileged to be on the cover of 989 Sports’ MLB 2000," said Mo Vaughn. ‘‘I am excited to be working with the 989 Sports team to make MLB 2000 the most outstanding baseball videogame for the PlayStation."

Vaughn, a nine-year MLB veteran, has been selected three times to the American League All-Star team. He has hit at least 35 home runs in each of the past four seasons and was named American League’s Most Valuable Player in 1995. In 1998, Vaughn batted a career-high .337 (second in American League) with 40 home runs and 115 RBI.

Acclaim’s Bust-A-Move ’99 Brings Bubble-Bursting Fun To The Nintendo 64 and PlayStation

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc., a worldwide interactive entertainment company, announced the upcoming April release of Bust-A-Move ’99 for the N64 and PlayStation. A well-established brand in the popular puzzle game category, Bust-A-Move ’99 is the latest addition to the premier puzzle series that features intense multiplayer action and all new levels and characters.

‘‘For the first time ever, Bust-A-Move fans can experience four-player action on the N64. Players can also enjoy more of everything they like about the series - more gameplay, more levels, and the ability to create your own puzzles," said Christina Recchio, assistant product manager at Acclaim Entertainment. ‘‘Kids of all ages will enjoy hours of Bust-A-Move ’99’s unrivaled, puzzle excitement."

In Bust-A-Move ’99, players must free eight characters trapped in Bubble World by a mysterious spell cast by Dunk, Bubble World’s magical master. The only way to free Dunk’s victims is by battling brain-busting boards of bubbles.

Bust-A-Move ’99 features all new graphics, new bubbles, and obstructive blocks. The N64 version offers four-player head-to-head competition and rumble pack support. Both the N64 and PlayStation games feature several different modes to test out players skills including: Challenge, CPU, Edit, Win Contest, Collection and Head-to-Head Modes. Bust-A-Move ’99’s Edit Mode allows players to create their own puzzles and save them to a memory card, and the Challenge mode evaluates gamers’ play. The Collection mode provides access to over 1,000 of the best Bust-A-Move puzzles ever created. Bust-A-Move ’99 will be supported by a national print campaign in all the gaming publications, as well as a major online and consumer promotion campaign.

Hasbro Interactive Awarded License for World’s Most Successful Video Game

Leading interactive games publisher, Hasbro Interactive strengthened its action game line up for ’99 with the addition of video game favorite Tetris. The company announced today it has signed a licensing agreement with The Tetris Company and Blue Planet Software to publish the next generation of Tetris for both PlayStation game console and PC platforms. The Next Tetris offers a brand new twist to the classic ’clear the lines’ game play providing fresh graphics, new game play variations and compelling multi-player options.

"We are thrilled that Tetris is joining Hasbro Interactive’s ’99 line," said Tom Dusenberry, president of Hasbro Interactive. "With its broad-based appeal and exciting new game play, Tetris will fit in perfectly with our blockbuster action titles Frogger and Centipede."

With more than 50 million copies sold since 1986, Tetris is one of the most successful video games in history. In Hasbro Interactive’s The Next Tetris players can choose to play a modern day twist on the game or play the original Classic Tetris . The object of The Next Tetris is to clear the lines at the bottom of the playfield by arranging the falling blocks to fill in a horizontal line. The game introduces brand new features like cascades and time trials, as well as fresh new graphics and sound. Also included is a new multi-player ranking system that enables opponents to compete against each other regardless of their skill level, allowing friends and family members of all ages to join in the fun.

"We are very excited to be working with Hasbro Interactive on ’The Next Tetris’," said Henk Rogers, Founder and CEO of Blue Planet Software, Inc. "We’ve been looking for a major partner to help us grow the Tetris brand for the future, and Hasbro Interactive’s expertise in brand-building and reputation as a high quality game publisher is a winning combination for us."

Hasbro Interactive’s The Next Tetris for the PlayStation game console is scheduled for release in June, with a PC version to follow in the fall. The Next Tetris is designed and developed by Blue Planet Software, Inc.

Konami Introduces Gamers to Terror-filled Town of Silent Hill

Konami of America, Inc., leading developer of electronic entertainment for the home video game and PC game markets, is now shipping Silent Hill, the highly anticipated action/adventure thriller, exclusively for the Sony PlayStation game console. Gamers risk exploration in the town of Silent Hill as the main character, Harry Mason. While driving into town, Harry swerves to avoid hitting what looks like a young girl, leaving him unconscious. When he awakens to realize his own daughter is missing from the car, a search of the town reveals that most of its inhabitants have also vanished. Their location, and the simultaneous appearance of an otherworldly dimension, kicks off the bone-chilling action. Nightmare visions begin and demons start roaming the streets

in search of a kill. The bloody effects that follow serve to represent the truly frightening psychological horror found in the town.

"The animated sequences in Silent Hill are among the best Konami has ever done," notes Tim Dunley, Konami's Vice President of Marketing. "In fact, they are easily on par with the best this industry has seen. Used to advance the storyline, gamers and horror fans alike will love the visual elements found throughout. Similarly, gamers will not believe the intricate psychological workings that take the plot deep into the characters' minds. Silent Hill takes gamers further into mystery and horror and establishes a genre within itself." The terrifying plot leads gamers to discover Silent Hill's demonic, alter ego world. Actions in Silent Hill affect events in this dreamlike world and vice versa the mystery of how that exactly happens is another key in this game and opens new twists and turns in the plot. Interactions with other characters become blurred throughout, as gamers must decide whom to trust.

"Similarly, the lighting effects in Silent Hill are some of the most cleverly executed elements the industry has seen," continues Dunley. "Certain areas are completely dark and can only be viewed with the assistance of a flashlight, giving plenty of opportunities for a player's light to pan over gruesome finds. Monsters can jump into the light from nowhere almost onto the player's toes. Additionally, the ever-present fog and other weather effects give the town an added eeriness and provide the player with a very realistic setting." Konami will kick off its concentrated marketing effort behind Silent Hill with television advertising and will also feature print and in-store point of sale advertisements, as well as radio and online promotions. Television ads will target 18-34 year old males and will begin in February for a four-week slate on networks such as Comedy Central, MTV and ESPN. An extensive print campaign is also being planned for March and April, including ads in major video game enthusiast books and consumer publications such as DC Comics and Sport Magazine. More than 1000 radio spots will be heard in the top 25 markets starting March 1 with each market participating in a product giveaway, including a grand prize of a Sony PlayStation. More than two million demo discs will be available in the marketplace.

Sony Spills Beans on PlayStation 2 Chip

Feb. 18, 1999 (mmWire, Vol. 6, No. 33 via COMTEX) -- Ending weeks of speculation, Sony Tuesday unveiled the 128- bit processor at the heart of its next PlayStation, at an engineering conference dubbed the "Chip Olympics."

Although Sony refuses to confirm or deny whether the chip is definitely destined for PSX2, mmWire has obtained documents from conference organizer IEEE that say this is the case. "We're not in a position to confirm that at this time," a Sony official tells mmWire.

A co-operative venture between Sony and Toshiba Microelectronics, the MIPS-based chip design was showcased by Masakazu Suzuoki, a director of Sony Computer Entertainment, at the annual International Solid-State Circuits Conference in San Francisco.

The 10m-transistor chip runs at 250MHz, has a 128-bit internal bus and

two floating-point vector units (the current 32-bit PlayStation CPU runs at 33Mhz). With an MPEG-2 decoder built in, it’s a betting certainty that the PlayStation 2 will support DVD playback. A supporting abstract for the presentation says the processor is "targeted for high-end consumer electronics such as games and network applications."

A Sony statement calls the chip the "Emotion Engine," a result of R&D to develop chips with performance that enables software developers to "synthesize realistic behavioral animation that make characters appear as though they act and move on their own will" in high-speed, high-quality 3D.

Sony to Launch New PlayStation by March 2000

Sony Computer Entertainment Inc, a unit of Sony Corp , plans to launch a new version of its popular PlayStation video game machine by March 2000, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported on Monday.

A spokesman for Sony Computer declined to comment on the report.

The paper said Sony and Toshiba Corp had jointly developed a 128-bit microprocessor for the new PlayStation, capable of providing motion picture-quality images.

The new chip is able to process nearly 50 times as much three-dimensional image data as rival Sega Enterprises Ltd’s 128-bit Dreamcast game console, it said.

Sony’s new game machine will also be able to play music and movies from digital video disks, the report said.

Its data-processing capability will be several times that of a personal computer and the price will be kept below 100,000 yen, the report said.

Sony Computer Entertainment said last week it was likely to unveil a new chip that could be used in future versions of the machine at a meeting for PlayStation software developers in Tokyo on Tuesday.

As of December last year total global shipments of the 32-bit PlayStation had reached 50 million units since its launch in December 1994.

PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast News Spurs Surge for Next Generation Online

Next Generation magazine and website announce that a 40% surge in visitors at Next Generation Online on Wednesday, February 17 was spurred by a story about PlayStation 2 technology announcements.

Next Generation Online ran the PlayStation 2 story following an announcement by Sony researchers at ISSCC (International Solid-State Circuits Conference) regarding technical specifications for a processor called the "Emotion Engine". Wednesday’s upswing in web traffic was

above and beyond the general 20% increase unique visitors a day that Next Generation Online has enjoyed in the last several months.

"These web traffic and circulation gains are great vital signs not only for Next Generation but also for the gaming industry. They are signs of healthy consumer interest that should help 1999 be bigger and better than any previous year in the industry. Next Generation focuses on the forefront of gaming industry and is the perfect forum for any company who wants hard core, elite gamers to buy their products," stated Bill Blummer, publisher of Next Generation.

Next Generation magazine is experiencing spectacular growth at the newsstand following several issues with Dreamcast features and other news about eagerly anticipated games announced on the cover. Next Generation's holiday issues doubled the sell-through of single copy sales of previous months. As the release dates of next round of consoles draw near, demand for the magazine will continue to grow tremendously.

Piracy, 'Net Seen Challenging Video Gamers

Video game sales are set for more breakneck growth this year as consumers flock to cyberspace for thrills from deer hunting to war simulations.

But rampant piracy and cutthroat competition will take their toll, forcing gamemakers to stay alive by merging, said Doug Lowenstein, president of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

''This is the fastest-growing entertainment industry in the world," said Lowenstein, whose group represents 85 percent of the U.S. video game industry.

Sales of games for personal computers and gaming consoles in the United States swelled 25 percent to $5.5 billion last year, Lowenstein said in an interview.

''We expect the industry to continue to grow at double-digit rates in 1999," Lowenstein said.

Older computer users were boosting sales by snapping up such games as a virtual deer hunting program that surprised the industry by rocketing to the top of the best-sellers list, Lowenstein said.

''People used to look at this as a niche market for adolescent boys, but the majority of those who play PC and video games are adults," Lowenstein said.

Lowenstein hailed the growing role of the Internet in the gaming world, but cautioned that there were hefty costs and risks to doing business in the freewheeling global network.

Although a sophisticated new breed of multi-player interactive games had emerged to take advantage of the Internet, lofty prices for the powerful equipment needed to support play was a problem for most firms, he said.

While the Internet offered a promising marketplace for computer games,

online gaming accounted for only 5 percent of total industry revenues last year, he said.

Moreover, it was nearly impossible to police the Web for illegal sales of copyrighted software, he said.

‘‘The Internet makes piracy easy and even in some perverse ways legitimizes it," Lowenstein said.

Copyright violations on the Internet compounded traditional forms of piracy, such as copying hundreds of dollars of software onto compact discs selling for a few dollars.

Piracy cost American video game publishers $3.2 billion worldwide last year, with China, Mexico and Russia among the worst offenders, Lowenstein said.

Lowenstein forecast the battle for joysticks would spark more mergers in a rapidly changing industry that has seen its share of complicated takeovers in the past three years.

Recent deals include toymaker Mattel Inc.’s purchase last December of Learning Co., which itself had moved aggressively to buy rivals Broderbund Software Inc. and Mindscape Inc.

French media company Havas last November acquired the video game and consumer software business of Cendant Corp. (NYSE:CD - news), which had earlier bought out software developers Sierra and Blizzard.

Such consolidations meant that four-fifths of industry revenues now flowed through some 20 companies, and Lowenstein expected the number of players to shrink further.

‘‘That’s pretty significant concentration, and it’s going to get more concentrated -- maybe five or 10 companies," he said.

On-line Game Pirate Shuts Down; Defendant Hands Over Equipment

Following a raid on its New York headquarters and subsequent lawsuit filed by the Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) and its members, a Web site offering pirate video games for sale is now out of business.

The announcement comes as the IDSA continues its Internet anti-piracy efforts, as Cyberspace has become an increasingly popular delivery system for pirate products.

Liam McLaughlin, who operated the pirate Web site, turned over his computer equipment, paid a fine, and issued a public apology as part of a settlement agreement stemming from the lawsuit filed by the IDSA and eight of its members -- Sony Computer Entertainment America, Electronic Arts, Capcom, Crystal Dynamics, GT Interactive Software, Interplay, Virgin Interactive Entertainment and THQ Inc.

McLaughlin’s Internet site offered pirated versions of more than 100 games designed to run on the Sony PlayStation(TM).

In his public apology, McLaughlin wrote, "I now understand why illegal copying robs video game developers, who put months and years of talent and hard work into creating great games. It also rips off the majority of our fellow gamers who purchase legitimate product. Finally, illegal copying hurts the video game publishers who put up the money to produce the games we enjoy.

"I apologize for my unlawful actions. Piracy is no joke, and it is no act of altruism, it ultimately hurts all of us who love playing video games," McLaughlin added.

"This case is just the first step in the video and computer game industry's coordinated campaign to combat the crime of on-line piracy of our products," said Douglas Lowenstein, president of the IDSA. "The message we are sending Mr. McLaughlin and those like him is that we are serious about identifying those who unlawfully replicate or distribute video and computer games via the Internet and prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law."

Lowenstein said that in the past several months, the IDSA has shut down more than 200 Web sites offering pirated entertainment software for sale or for free downloads. "Internet piracy has become a cottage industry that is extremely damaging to the entertainment software business, and we intend to do all we can to stop it."

The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA) is the U.S. association exclusively dedicated to serving the business and public affairs needs of companies that publish video and computer games for video game consoles, personal computers and the Internet.

IDSA members collectively account for more than 85 percent of the $5.5 billion in entertainment software sold in the United States in 1998, and billions more in export sales of U.S.-made entertainment software.

The IDSA offers services to entertainment software publishers including a global anti-piracy program, owning and operating the Electronic Entertainment Expo tradeshow, business and consumer research, government relations and First Amendment and intellectual property protection efforts.

Konami of America Ships 'Fisherman's Bait'

Konami of America, Inc., leading developer of electronic entertainment for the home video game and PC game markets, is now shipping Fisherman's Bait, a sport fishing challenge for the PlayStation game console. Gamers can choose from four different modes of play: Beginner, Training, Tournament and the new Head-to-Head, featuring split screen for fishing against friends. In Beginner Mode, instructions on how to play are displayed and four optimal casting points are revealed. Training Mode allows gamers to freely choose from four, photo realistic lake settings and up to 15 different spots on the lake to become quickly acquainted with the game.

Tournament Mode gives gamers the opportunity to compete against others. At each lake, the player must pass a 10-minute, qualifying round based on the total weight of fish caught. If the qualifying round is successful, the player moves onto the actual tournament round for that

lake. In the tournament round, the player has 10 minutes to catch three bass with the gross weight of the bass then becoming his score. Six types of beautifully rendered fish, from rainbow trout to largemouth bass, are the catch of the day.

"Fisherman's Bait is the ultimate sportsman's challenge," notes Tim Dunley, Konami's Vice President of Marketing. "Gamers work up to having total control, including what lake to fish, what spot to fish in and which bait to use once in the water, a gamer's success depends upon how the fish are biting and your skill with a rod and reel."

The play proves even more realistic, offering the selection of seven different lures, including Popper, Pencil Bait, Crank Bait, Vibration, Jerk Bait, Worms and Grubs. Each lure has color variations for weather and water conditions. Once a fish is hooked, the screen changes to Fight Mode and the gamer must judge how fast to reel in the fish, in which direction to move his rod and when to let the line play out. To immerse the player even more, there is feedback from the line when the player is using the Dual Shock controller (sold separately).

->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!
"""""""""""""""""""""

BIG News from Donald A. Thomas, Jr. at I.C.When....
http://www.icwhen.com

For immediate release
Contact Keita Iida and John Hardie
info@cgexpo.com
914-835-4069, 516-568-9768
http://www.cgexpo.com

ATARI FOUNDER NOLAN BUSHNELL CONFIRMED TO ATTEND CLASSIC GAMING EXPO '99 Father of Electronic Game Entertainment is Distinguished Guest for August Show

February 26, 1999

VALLEY STREAM, NY -- The Classic Gaming Expo '99 (CGE'99) promoters announced today that legendary entrepreneur and visionary, Mr. Nolan Bushnell, has confirmed his intention to attend this year's event in Las Vegas. Bushnell, Founder of Atari Corporation, creator of "PONG" and considered by many to be the "Father of the Video Game Industry" is slated to give a keynote address and join a panel of other industry-related pioneers in a round table discussion.

"We are elated that Mr. Bushnell has agreed to participate in this year's festivities," exclaimed John Hardie, co-promoter of CGE'99. "The entire six billion dollar electronic entertainment industry owes a great deal to the vision and leadership of the individual that actually established the industry. Many of us have been inspired by his passion to educate and entertain."

In addition to Atari, Bushnell was also the founder and mastermind behind Chuck E. Cheese Pizza Time Theater, Catalyst Technologies, ByVideo, Axlon, Androbot, Etak (just to name a few), and has continued to stay in the mainstream of today's gaming industry.

Bushnell was also granted patents on some of the basic technologies utilized in early video games and is the inventor or co-inventor of numerous patented products in various industries throughout the world.

Currently, Bushnell has several projects in development, including In.10.City Inc., a "super mall for fun and education," and Playnet.com, Inc., a public venue internet-based entertainment corporation. He is Chairman and CEO of both companies.

"I'm excited to be attending this year's Classic Gaming Expo '99," remarked Bushnell, "especially since this year is the 25th Anniversary of the shipping of Atari's first home video game unit. Atari was an incredible period in my life and it will be interesting to shed some light on those days for those who didn't get to live them. It's going to be a fun weekend, catching up with old friends and meeting other classic gaming enthusiasts. I'm really looking forward to it!"

Bushnell was voted 1997's Man of the Year by AMI, a major coin-operated amusement industry trade show. He has also been inducted into the video game industry's Hall of Fame, was named Babson College's Entrepreneur of the Year, and is currently serving as the Commissioner of the Professional Gamers League. Among his numerous other distinctions, Bushnell holds a BSEE and is a "Distinguished Fellow" at the University of Utah, as well as having attended Stanford University. Bushnell frequently lectures at major universities and corporations around the nation on the topics of entrepreneurship, innovation and education.

Nolan Bushnell's Classic Gaming Expo '99 keynote presentation will take place Saturday, August 14 at the Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada. Internet users can visit http://www.cgexpo.com for updated news and registration information.

Conceived and coordinated by two of the individuals responsible for coordinating last year's highly successful "World of Atari" event, Classic Gaming Expo is the industry's only annual event that is dedicated to celebrating the roots of electronic entertainment, bringing together industry pioneers, gaming enthusiasts and the media for the ultimate in learning, game-playing and networking. Classic Gaming Expo is a production of CGE Services, Corp. (www.cgexpo.com)

JagFest '99 Announcement

I'm pleased to announce JagFest '99. The _tentative_ date and location is June 18 in Rochester, MN. I know June doesn't work for everybody, but it's the best time for me this summer and also keeps the event from conflicting in any way with CGE '99. Still, I'm open to changing it if it would dramatically improve attendance.

Details are on the below web page. Look for jagfest.atari.org to be the new link within the next two days.

http://homepage2.rconnect.com/forhan/jagfest.html

Let’s get the word out! I’d like to see as many links, newsgroup posts, email newsletters, ’zines, etc. carry some reference to JagFest ’99, so we can make this the biggest event yet. I wouldn’t mind opening it up to Atari computer support as well, if I can get some ST groups to come in to the show. A bigger emphasis on other Atari systems from the past would be welcome as well.

Feedback is appreciated, and please be sure to send me an ’Attendee’ e-mail if you plan on attending.

Thanks,
Carl Forhan
Songbird Productions

Carl Forhan
forhan@millcomm.com
http://homepage2.rconnect.com/forhan/games.html

JagFest ’99 in Rochester, MN

From: Carl Forhan <forhan@millcomm.com>

This is another call to sign up now for JagFest ’99 in Rochester, MN, on June 18, 1999! Join Atari fans from all over as we "Celebrate Atari" in the Midwest this year.

Note that the ’fest is open to Atari ST/Falcon user groups as well, who may be interested in attending or demoing or selling products. I’d like to see the ’fest promoted in as many web sites and ’zines as possible. People are welcome to copy the graphics off the JagFest website to use as links to my page. Speaking of the graphics, note that I left two spots open on the jfbig.gif graphic. This is intended to accommodate other games that may be demoed at the ’fest.

So, if I receive confirmation that Gorf or Assassin or something else will be demoed, I’d be glad to include it in the graphic. Or maybe the logo of a company that commits to attend.

Keep those sign-up emails coming! We need to build up the roster to entice area businesses to set up shop for the day (several shops in the Twin Cities carry lots of Atari stuff).

New on the ’fest page: We will have a "Rare & Unreleased" exhibit of Atari hardware. Flash ROMs, developer boards, blue & gray controllers, unreleased games, and more! You won’t want to miss it.

Thanks,

Carl Forhan

Stella Release 1.1

From: Bradford Wayne Mott <bwmott@unity.ncsu.edu>

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```
 SSSS    tt          lll  lll
SS  SS   tt           ll   ll
SS     tttttt  eeee   ll   ll   aaaa
 SSSS    tt   ee  ee  ll   ll      aa
    SS   tt   eeeeee  ll   ll   aaaaa  --  "An Atari 2600 VCS Emulator"
SS  SS   tt   ee      ll   ll  aa  aa
 SSSS     ttt  eeeee llll llll  aaaaa
```

Release 1.1 for DOS, Linux, and Unix

The Atari 2600 Video Computer System (VCS), introduced in 1977, was the most popular home video game system of the early 1980's. Now you can enjoy all of your favorite Atari 2600 games on your PC thanks to Stella! Stella is a multi-platform Atari 2600 VCS emulator written in C++. Stella allows you to play most of the games written for the Atari 2600 including Supercharger games.

This is the 1.1 release of Stella for DOS, Linux, and Unix.

Distributions for other operating systems will appear as they become available. The three distributions currently available are:

* Binary distribution for Linux (stella-1.1-linux-x86.tar.gz)
* Binary distribution for DOS (st11.zip)
* Source code distribution for Unix and DOS (stella-1.1-src.tar.gz)

A few 2600 ROM images, BIN files, are included with these distributions. BEYOND THESE FILES NONE OF THE DISTRIBUTIONS CONTAIN ANY 2600 ROM IMAGES. PLEASE DON'T WRITE ASKING FOR ROMS BECAUSE THEY ARE COPYRIGHTED! If you own any of the Atari 2600 Action Packs by Activision you can use the ROM images from them with Stella.

New in this Release

* DOS and Linux versions support real Atari 2600 paddles using a special PC game port adaptor
* Linux version uses the new 1.2.x joystick driver API
* Added support for the "-display" option to the X Window version
* Added support for private colormaps to the X Window version
* Fixed a few bugs in the Supercharger emulation
  - A major bug in the ROM loading routine was fixed
  - Multi-loading in "Escape from the Mindmaster" works correctly
  - All Supercharger games load and execute at this point
* Added a small hack to the TIA code to fix a display problem in "Escape from the Mindmaster"
* Improved TIA emulation to support the RESPx multi-sprite trick

Distribution Site

The Stella distributions can be obtained from the Stella home page at:

http://stella.atari.org

If for some reason you are unable to connect to this page please try again later or try http://www4.ncsu.edu/~bwmott/2600/.

Contacts

If you have any questions regarding Stella send mail to:

Bradford W. Mott (bwmott@acm.org)

Have Fun!

--

Bradford W. Mott (bwmott@acm.org)
http://www4.ncsu.edu/~bwmott/www
Computer Science Department
North Carolina State University

AtariNews: On The Prowl
03/01/99

LATEST HEADLINES:

JAGFEST ’99 ANNOUNCED

Mark your calendars now to attend "JagFest ’99 -- Celebrate Atari" in Rochester, MN on June 18, 1999. Carl Forhan, a well-known hobby developer for the Lynx and Jaguar, has agreed to host this year’s ’fest. Events include a Protector demo for the Jaguar, BattleSphere head-to-head competitions, and demos of other unreleased games. Be sure to sign up now!

Drop by the official website at either of the below links for details:

http://jagfest.atari.org
http://homepage2.rconnect.com/forhan/jagfest.html

ALFRED’S CHALLENGE NOW AVAILABLE FOR THE 2600 VCS

Alfred’s Challenge, the sellout favorite of the 1998 World of Atari convention, is now being sold exclusively by Best Electronics. This challenging platform game is compatible with NTSC, PAL, and SECAM systems, and retails for $20 which includes the cart with color label and a manual.

http://www.best-electronics-ca.com

CAN YOU BE THE BEST JAGUAR GAME PLAYER FOR A MONTH?

The Jaguar Top 50 is looking for a few good Jaguar players for Player of the Month. The Player of the Month is chosen from either the one who sends in the most scores or someone who attains an extremely high score in a particular game. Are you up for the challenge?

http://www.angelfire.com/nv/jaguartop50/frames.html

OMC GAMES MAKES PROGRESS ON THE ASSASSIN

OMC Games has released a second demo of The Assassin, a role playing game, for the Atari Jaguar BJL or official Jaguar development kit. OMC is still in search of an artist for Jaguar developments, and OMC states the graphics in The Assassin will be greatly improved by the final release, currently slated for third quarter 1999.

http://www.omcgames.com

DEFEND YOUR CITIES IN HASBRO'S RE-RELEASE OF THE ATARI CLASSIC

Missile Command is coming later this year. Hasbro's latest Atari update is headed for the PC, PlayStation, and even the Sega Dreamcast. It is unknown right now what this game is going to be like exactly, but maybe Hasbro will decide to use Jaguar's Missile Command 3D for the design.

http://www.hasbrointeractive.com

ATARI CLASSICS COMING TO THE COLOR GAME BOY

As announced before, Telegames released Yars' Revenge onto the Color Game Boy. Now, Majesco Sales has released Centipede onto the Game Boy. It plays just like the original arcade version. Also, Activision has released Asteroids onto the Game boy. This is an updated version, which has more variations of the game.

http://www.nintendo.com/gb/asteroids/index.html

Send any comments or submissions for "AtariNews: On The Prowl" to: Brian Gudzevich (Editor) at: Brionhold@aol.com

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Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

FCC Rules on Internet Dial-Up Calls

Telephone calls by a computer user to connect to the Internet no longer are considered local after federal regulators classified the dial-ups as interstate communications, subject to federal jurisdiction.

The Federal Communications Commission insists Thursday's action merely resolves a dispute among phone companies over how to compensate each other for Internet connections and to clarify the role of state and federal regulators.

It said the decision will not affect how consumers tap into the Internet or how much they pay.

But consumer groups and FCC Commissioner Harold Furchtgott-Roth, who protested by not participating in the vote, believe the action could inadvertently open the door to higher future charges for Internet access by computer users.

Gene Kimmelman, co-director of the Consumers Union's Washington office, said the decision eventually could lead to people paying per-minute

rates for using the Internet, just as they now do with long-distance phone calls.

But the FCC said its decision preserves an existing provision that exempts Internet service providers, such as America Online, from paying per-minute ‘‘access" charges to local telephone companies. Long-distance companies now pay these fees, which they pass on to their customers. They account for about 30 cents of every $1 of a long-distance bill.

‘‘Consumers are used to dialing a local phone number to get access to the Internet, and they are used to paying that access as a local call," said FCC Chairman Bill Kennard. ‘‘Nothing that we are doing in this item will change that."

George Vradenburg, a senior vice president at AOL, agreed that the decision will have ‘‘no effect on Internet charges."

But the critics worry that local Bell telephone companies and GTE might use the decision as legal basis to getting a court to overturn the provision that exempts Internet service providers from paying access fees to local phone companies.

FCC officials believed nothing in the decision would help the Bells make such a legal case. AOL’s Vradenburg said he’s not worried.

Also as part of the decision, the FCC agreed to phase out, after current contracts expire, hefty fees the Bells and GTE pay smaller local phone companies to route customers’ calls to the Internet.

The FCC proposed letting states and companies decide how carriers compensate each other in the future. The Bells and GTE praised the idea.

Separately, the FCC agreed to release an audit of the five Bell telephone companies showing that $5 billion in equipment can’t be accounted for. However, the full results won’t be released for at least 10 days.

The Bells contend the audit, which was conducted in 1997, is flawed and overestimates missing equipment. FCC officials dispute this.

Audit results, the Bells say, won’t effect rates directly, but they may have an indirect effect: consumer groups and AT&T are already using the audit to press for lower local and long-distance rates. House Commerce Committee Chairman Thomas Bliley, R-Va., said ‘‘consumers may be paying more on their phone bills" than they should.

The FCC intends to seek public comments on the audit, its ramifications and what action, if any, the commission should take. FCC staff recommended, however, that the Bells be required to take write-offs and making accounting corrections.

Microsoft VP Queried on Downloading

A government attorney clashed with a senior Microsoft Corp. executive over the often long and awkward downloading of Web browsers over the Internet.

Microsoft Vice President Brad Chase said Thursday it was a simple process. But under cross-examination by Justice Department attorney David Boies, Chase acknowledged it also can take some time for personal computer owners with low-speed phone connections.

The issue is significant because of Microsoft's claim that people who receive its browser as part of the Windows operating system simply can switch to another, such as Navigator, the browser made by Microsoft rival Netscape.

Boies sought to show how downloading browser software over the Web is much more difficult for consumers than getting it with their new computers or through Internet service providers like America Online.

The Justice Department contends in its antitrust lawsuit that Microsoft used its monopoly power and illegal tactics to crush and discourage competition, including Netscape and its rival browser.

Boies presented Chase with a March 1997 e-mail, sent to him by a Microsoft employee, on how to get more people to use the company's browser.

''Almost 60 percent of all surfers have never downloaded any software from the Web. My sense is that these people are not very likely to download anything, let alone a browser that takes two hours to download," wrote that employee, Kumar Mehta.

The memo goes on to report that ''80 percent of those who do not use IE say they have no plans to switch to it, which means that if we take away IE from the o/s (operating system), most nav (Netscape Navigator) users will never switch to us."

Chase said he had no problem with the report but disputed its interpretation. He said Mehta was being ''dramatic."

Boies also went over the deposition taken from another Microsoft employee, Joe Belfiore, a computer programmer who last March cited ''tons of feedback that suggest that downloading IE (Internet Explorer) takes too long, is too hard."

''You'll find that the number of hours that it takes to download these components over a phone line is incredibly discouraging to people, often fails, and the result is that people don't get an improved user experience at all," Belfiore said in his testimony.

Chase acknowledged that at the time, he oversaw efforts to make Microsoft's browser smaller to help make it more appealing to consumers. But he disagreed with Belfiore's suggestion that downloading is difficult. He suggested that Belfiore perhaps was engaging in self-critique popular in the ''Microsoft culture."

U.S. Government Ponders Remedies Against Microsoft

The U.S. Justice Department and representatives of 19 states are pondering possible remedies if they win their landmark antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. -- from breaking up the company to ordering it to cease violating the law, people close to the case said Monday.

The Washington Post said in Monday’s editions that several possible sanctions were under consideration but no decisions had been made. People close to the case said that was true and outlined what those possible solutions were.

After 15 weeks of trial, Microsoft Corp. is more than halfway through its defense against allegations that it used monopoly power in its Windows operating system for personal computers to preserve and extend that power.

The case has centered on allegations that Microsoft competed unfairly against Netscape Communications Corp. in the competition for Web browsers to surf the Internet.

The cross-examination of several major witnesses for Microsoft has been contentious, and the Post said that ‘‘most observers of the trial believe the odds are high that the judge will rule against Microsoft later this year."

But Microsoft says that much of what people see in the courtroom is little more than theatrics and that its case is stronger than some observers believe. General counsel William Neukom has said repeatedly that the government has failed to attack most of the assertions its witnesses made in direct written testimony, which is the bulk of its case.

Further, company officials say those assertions are backed up with documentary evidence. Experts say if that is so then the company could be in a strong position at either the trial or appellate court level.

But if the company were to lose at the trial level, sources familiar with the government’s thinking say there are four possible alternatives. Two would make structural changes to the company and the other approaches would be more regulatory.

In recent years, Justice Department antitrust division chief Joel Klein and Federal Trade Commission Chairman Robert Pitofsky have expressed a preference for one-time solutions because they do not require continuing oversight and keep government clear of decisions better made by the market in the country’s fast-moving high technology industries.

The two structural solutions are:

-- Break the company into several identical ‘‘Baby Bills," each of which would get complete copies of all of Microsoft’s intellectual property. This approach has been endorsed by former Judge Robert Bork, who advocates breaking the company into three pieces.

-- Split the company into two very different parts: One that builds the Windows operating system and another that builds applications, such as Microsoft Office. But there are no clear boundaries between the operating system and applications, which could mean further wrangling.

In fact, Microsoft’s decision to integrate a Web browser into its operating system is in contention in the trial -- with the company saying it is a part of the operating system, while the government says it is an application.

The two more regulatory solutions are:

-- Require licensing of the secret Microsoft ‘‘source code" to competitors. However, those familiar with such an approach say that the solution was less than fully successful when the Federal Trade Commission forced the Xerox Corp. to license its copier patents in 1975. The government might find itself in endless tussles with the company over the costs and conditions for licensing. Microsoft might also make swift changes to its code before it licensed its products.

-- The weakest approach would be for the judge to issue orders prohibiting the company from continuing the business practices which the government contends are illegal. The government reached an agreement with Microsoft in 1995 to prohibit certain business practices, only to go into court in 1997 and allege that Microsoft had violated the agreement.

Should the government win the case, District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson would have to decide whether to hold a separate remedies phase of the trial to take testimony that would help him decide which sanction to apply, or whether to depend on evidence already been entered.

Compaq Executive Says ’No Alternative’ To Windows

A Compaq Computer Corp. executive told the judge in the Microsoft antitrust case Wednesday his company has no ‘‘viable alternative" to purchasing Microsoft Windows for its consumer personal computers.

John Rose, a senior vice president at Compaq, testified that his company will buy the Microsoft Computer Corp. Windows operating system for its consumer products until it sees something better.

‘‘Until that materializes there is no commercial viable alternative?" asked District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson.

‘‘That is correct, your honor," Rose replied.

The Justice Department and 19 states allege that Microsoft holds a monopoly for the Windows operating system and has used illegal tactics to preserve that monopoly and try to extend it to related businesses.

Rose said that except for a small percentage of machines used for specialized business applications, Compaq sells its computers with Windows.

Government lawyer David Boies presented Rose with a Nov. 10, 1998 ‘‘Initial Internal Term Sheet" which outlined plans for negotiating with Microsoft.

The court exhibit was sealed from public view, except for one line which was read out loud by Boies: ‘‘In the past, Microsoft’s (personal computer manufacturer) business terms are indicative of what one would expect from a monopoly."

Rose said he was unfamiliar with that term sheet, but acknowledged under questioning that his company agreed to pay higher prices for Windows in 1998.

After Rose denied that the increase was ‘‘significant" the judge cleared the courtroom for a discussion of pricing.

Although price was not discussed in open court, Microsoft executive Joachim Kempin estimated in a Dec. 16, 1997, e-mail admitted into evidence earlier that ‘‘Compaq might pay us $750 million" in 1998.

After the public was readmitted, Boies asked: ‘‘Compaq is not as a result of the increase evaluating other operating systems for installation on personal computers, is it?"

‘‘That is correct," replied Rose. Justice Department guidelines say that one test of a monopoly is whether it can raise prices by a significant amount without losing business.

Earlier, in written testimony made available Wednesday, Microsoft executive Daniel Rosen denied that he made any offers to divide the market for browsers with Netscape Communications Corp. in a meeting on June 21, 1995. Rosen was expected to start testifying Thursday after Rose completes his testimony.

The government alleges that Microsoft competed unfairly with Netscape in the market for Web browsers to surf the Internet.

The government asserts that Microsoft tried to get Netscape to give up competing with it at that June meeting, promising to invest in Netscape and seeking a board seat. Rosen said that was wrong.

‘‘There was no proposed ’market division’," Rosen said. He said he also told Netscape President James Barksdale that a board seat ‘‘was not in any way essential."

And, he said, Microsoft chief Bill Gates ‘‘was not fixated on a board seat or on an equity investment either."

‘‘I believe that Netscape either is attempting to rewrite history or deliberately misled me and my colleagues during our June, 1995 discussions," Rosen said.

Microsoft Executive Says AOL Aided Government

Despite its agreement to purchase Web browser maker Netscape, America Online is still using Microsoft’s rival product in an effort to bolster the U.S. government antitrust case against Microsoft, a Microsoft official testified Wednesday.

Since March of 1996, Microsoft Corp. has provided the Internet Web browser for America Online Inc.’s customers under a contract that AOL could have canceled at the end of 1998.

Although AOL has agreed to purchase Netscape Communications Corp., the Internet service provider decided against switching, Microsoft Vice President Brad Chase said.

‘‘That kind of shift would be inconsistent with AOL’s desire to support the government’s position in this case," Chase said. "I believe they

made a very careful decision not to do that."

However, Chase testified that it is ‘‘inevitable" that AOL will eventually switch its browser to Netscape.

Chase made the statement shortly before completing his testimony at Microsoft’s antitrust trial. The next witness was to be John Rose, an executive with Compaq Computer Corp., one of Microsoft’s biggest customers.

The Justice Department and 19 states allege that Microsoft used monopoly power to compete illegally against Netscape in the market for browsers, used to surf the Internet’s World Wide Web. Microsoft wanted to promote its own Internet Explorer Web browser, the government alleges.

AOL had no comment on Chase’s remarks. But when the renewal was announced on Nov. 24, 1998, AOL President Steve Case said that he expected to ‘‘maintain our working relationship with Microsoft, continuing to include Internet Explorer in the AOL service."

The AOL agreement to use Internet Explorer was key to helping Microsoft win the browser war against Netscape, giving Microsoft millions of new users through a single deal.

Earlier in the trial, AOL executive David Colburn had testified that his company believed its product needed to be on the Windows desktop screen and that was why it agreed to adopt the Microsoft browser.

Chase testified that AOL liked what he saw as the technical superiority of Microsoft’s Web browser over that of Netscape.

Also, in testimony made available Wednesday, Microsoft executive Daniel Rosen denied that he made any offers to divide the market for browsers with Netscape in a meeting on June 21, 1995. Rosen was expected to start testifying Thursday, after Compaq’s Rose completes his testimony.

The government alleges that Microsoft tried to get Netscape to give up competing with it at that June meeting, promising to invest in Netscape and seeking a board seat. Rosen said that was wrong.

‘‘There was no proposed ’market division’," Rosen said. He said he also told Netscape President James Barksdale that a board seat ‘‘was not in any way essential."

And, he said, Microsoft chief Bill Gates ‘‘was not fixated on a board seat or on an equity investment either."

‘‘I believe that Netscape either is attempting to rewrite history or deliberately misled me and my colleagues during our June, 1995 discussions," Rosen said.

Microsoft Witness Admits Error In Testimony

Microsoft Vice President Brad Chase conceded Tuesday he had testified incorrectly last week about a tape purporting to show the ease of installing the Netscape Navigator Web browser on Microsoft’s Windows

desktop.

Chase made the concession at Microsoft Corp.’s antitrust trial. He had shown a videotaped demonstration that made it appear easy to install Netscape Communications Corp.’s Web browser for users of America Online Inc.’s Internet service.

The tape skipped over a large part of the installation and Chase filled in some of the blanks with his testimony last week. Among other things, Chase repeatedly insisted Thursday that the initial download produced an ‘‘icon’’ on the Windows desktop.

But the government produced its own tape -- which did not skip over any parts of the installation -- showing that no icon appeared. That is significant, because without an icon users must go searching for the program download file to install it.

Chase and his lawyers reviewed the government tape over the weekend and Chase testified Tuesday that the government version was accurate.

‘‘Do you get an icon?" asked government lawyer David Boies. When Chase demurred, Boies continued to press and asked whether the icon would have shown up on the screen automatically. After much back-and-forth, Chase finally conceded: ‘‘No, it would not have."

The Justice Department and 19 states allege that Microsoft used monopoly power to compete illegally against Netscape in the market for browsers, used to surf the Internet’s World Wide Web.

Earlier in the trial, AOL executive David Colburn had testified that his company believed its product needed to be on the Windows desktop screen and that was why it agreed to adopt the Microsoft browser.

The AOL agreement was key to helping Microsoft win the browser war, giving Microsoft millions of new users through a single deal.

Chase had testified during the trial that he was unaware during negotiations with AOL that AOL considered it a priority to be on the Windows desktop.

Instead, Chase said that he believed AOL liked what Chase said was the technical superiority of Microsoft’s Web browser over that of Netscape.

Others have testified that Microsoft chief Bill Gates was reluctant to give AOL placement in the ‘‘Windows box," that is, programs that ship with Windows. He feared that it might compete with Microsoft’s own Internet service, the Microsoft Network, also known as MSN.

Boies showed Chase a deposition of Brad Silverberg, a senior vice president at Microsoft, who said that Gates considered it so important to win AOL that he was agreeing to put ‘‘a bullet through MSN’s head."

Boies also questioned Chase about a 1990 memo he had received that reported on a proposal to ‘‘not compete" with Intuit Inc.

Microsoft lawyer John Warden objected that the memo was old, but Boies argued that it ‘‘shows a pattern of anti-competitive behavior. It goes to the company’s overall pattern."

In the memo, Microsoft employee Mike Slade wrote in capital letters

that he had told Intuit at a meeting: ‘‘We’d rather not compete with you. Instead of growing the market, we’d just both spend a lot of money fighting each other for share."

Slade copied Chase in on the memo. Chase testified he did not remember receiving it. Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson said the memo was ‘‘too remote in time" and allowed only a few questions on it.

Compaq Denies Being ’Victim’ of Microsoft

Trying to undermine the government portrayal of the nation’s computer makers as victims of an overzealous Microsoft Corp., a senior Compaq Computer Corp. executive is crediting the software giant with making computers easier to use, more reliable and less expensive.

John Rose, the next witness in the Microsoft antitrust trial, also disputes the government’s characterization of several disagreements with Microsoft, including one that threatened the future of Compaq, the world’s largest maker of personal computers. "Compaq has not agreed with every position asserted by Microsoft, nor has Microsoft always agreed with our views," Rose said.

U.S.: Compaq Gave Microsoft Secrets

In a dramatic courtroom confrontation, the government recently alleged that Compaq Computer Corp. passed secret information to Microsoft Corp. about an upstart Microsoft competitor.

David Boies, a Justice Department lawyer, made the accusation in seeking to discredit testimony by a senior Compaq executive and Microsoft witness in the antitrust trail of the computer software giant. The witness, John T. Rose, a senior vice president of Compaq, testified he was unaware his company had passed along to Microsoft any confidential information about Be Inc., which also makes a computer operating system.

Microsoft Witness Backs Off On Evidence

A government lawyer Tuesday accused a Microsoft manager of making up evidence at the software giant’s antitrust trial and eventually forced the witness to retract his testimony.

The latest blow to Microsoft’s defense came in the cross-examination of Dan Rosen, a key witness who was present at critical meeting when, the government alleges, Microsoft issued a threat to rival Netscape.

The credibility problems were so acute for Rosen that the judge earlier joked that Microsoft’s lawyer was setting out on a ‘‘heroic endeavor" when he began examining Rosen.

The government alleges that Microsoft Corp. holds monopoly power in

personal computer operating systems and used it to compete illegally against Netscape Communications Corp. in the market for Web browsers.

Rosen was the top Microsoft employee at the June 21, 1995, meeting. The government says Microsoft threatened Netscape at the meeting in an effort to stop it from competing in Web browsers on Windows 95, which came out months later.

The latest embarrassment for Microsoft came when Boies tried to find out the first time that Rosen had obtained Netscape's Web browser for Windows 95.

''When did you first have available to you the Netscape Windows 95 browser," asked Boies.

''July 1995," said Rosen, adding in answer to a further question: ''After the June 21 meeting."

Boies showed an e-mail Rosen wrote May 11, before the meeting: ''Can I borrow/copy the Netscape Win95 new client they gave us?" meaning the new Netscape browser.

Rosen said he never actually got the browser. He said it was a test version that did not work, which a colleague received at a meeting with Netscape.

Boies looked at the witness and said slowly: ''You don't remember that, do you sir? You're just making that up right now."

''No, I remember it," Rosen insisted.

Boies: ''You're sure it was May and not April?"

Rosen: ''Yes."

Boies then introduced a one-sentence e-mail Rosen wrote on April 27: ''Do you remember who took the Netscape Win95 browser they gave us during our last meeting? I'd like to get a copy."

There was a moment of silence in the courtroom.

Then Rosen said: ''I stand corrected." Rosen admitted he himself was at the meeting where the software was handed out.

Rosen's credibility problems were underscored earlier when Microsoft lawyer Michael Lacovara -- who is in his 30s -- began his re-examination of Rosen, following a searing government cross-examination one day earlier.

''It's always inspiring to watch young people embark on heroic endeavors," said Judge Jackson with a smile.

Later in the day, Boies showed Rosen two documents from around the time of the key June 21, 1995 meeting. Boies was trying to establish that Microsoft threatened Netscape in an effort to get it to drop out of the market for Windows 95 Web browser.

In one document, Netscape co-founder Marc Andreessen said in notes allegedly taken during the June 21 meeting: ''Threat that (Microsoft) will own the Win95 client market and that Netscape should stay away."

The ‘‘Win95 client" in this case means the Web browser.

Rosen wrote to his chief, Bill Gates, a day later, summarizing the meeting and said his top goal was to ‘‘Establish Microsoft ownership of the Internet client platform for Win 95."

Rosen acknowledged that Microsoft wanted the companies not to compete. But he denied he or others threatened Netscape. ‘‘We offered several inducements if they would adopt our platform technology," he said.

In the afternoon, Eric Engstrom began testifying, examined by government lawyer Phil Malone. Engstrom, a Microsoft employee, talked about multimedia technologies.

Microsoft Subpoenas AOL, Sun, Netscape On Ties

Microsoft Corp. has subpoenaed America Online Inc., Netscape Communications Corp. and Sun Microsystems Inc. asking the three to produce information on their present ties and future business plans, officials at the three companies said Wednesday.

Jim Whitney, a spokesman for America Online, said Microsoft had contacted it on Feb. 15 with a demand that it turn over documents Microsoft has been seeking to defend itself in the government antitrust case being lodged against it.

A Microsoft spokesman said it had subpoenaed documents from the three companies to determine the effect of the agreements on competition, which is an issue in its trial.

Last November, America Online agreed to buy Netscape Communications for $4.2 billion in a three-way deal, in which Sun will resell Netscape’s enterprise software and provide servers that manage networks to America Online.

Sun spokeswoman Lisa Poulson said Sun received a subpoena last week regarding its role in the AOL-Netscape merger.

Previously, Sun had voluntarily given the U.S. Department of Justice partially redacted copies of its six contracts with AOL so that the DOJ could share the documents with Microsoft. The subpoena followed, Poulson said.

‘‘From our perspective, we delivered the relevant contracts without a subpoena, and we’re willing to and have been working to deliver whatever other information is appropriate to Microsoft in a timely manner," Poulson said in a statement.

Sun and AOL said they have been working with Microsoft on meeting the Redmond, Wash.-based company’s requests, while also seeking to protect their ability to withhold competitive information that might be used against them.

The companies said they expect the issues raised by the subpoenas to be resolved by the end of this week.

Poulson said the subpoena Sun received asks for documents concerning the

effect of Sun’s deal and its related agreements on Microsoft, operating systems, middleware, Web browsing software and any other software development platforms.

It also asks for documents related to the creation and distribution of Web browsing software, the number of subscribers to online services and estimates of traffic to the companies Web sites and any documents mentioning the deal’s possible affect on the U.S. versus Microsoft lawsuit.

The request for information extends to documents tied to communications among AOL, International Business Machines Corp. and its Lotus unit, Novell Inc. and Oracle Corp., who collectively amount to most of Microsoft’s major rivals.

It also requests documents tied to AOL’s decision to continue to use Microsoft’s Internet Explorer as the primary browser in its AOL service and any information related to the possibility of using Netscape or Sun Web browsing software in any future AOL service software.

This information was to be returned to Microsoft by February 22. The Sun spokeswoman said Sun had delivered a good portion of the materials, and was negotiating with Microsoft’s attorneys at the law firm of Sullivan and Cromwell on what else might be appropriate to search for and deliver.

Judge Shouts At Microsoft Witness

District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson shouted at a Microsoft witness Friday when the witness refused to stop arguing about the meaning of an e-mail written by Microsoft chief Bill Gates.

The incident occurred hours before the Microsoft antitrust trial was to adjourn for a number of weeks.

Bob Muglia, a senior vice president at Microsoft Corp., was appearing as a defense witness for his firm. Government lawyer David Boies had shown Muglia a May 14, 1997, e-mail from Gates which said: ‘‘I am hard core about NOT supporting" Java software from Sun Microsystems Inc.

Boies, who was trying to show that Gates was unhappy with Sun, wanted to know what that meant.

‘‘When someone at Microsoft says they are ’hard core’ about something, doesn’t that mean he really, really means it?" asked Boies.

‘‘Perhaps," replied Muglia, who then tried to explain away the Gates comment. Judge Jackson himself intervened.

‘‘I read it as saying he doesn’t like the idea of supporting it," said the judge of Gates and the Sun software. ‘‘I don’t think it can be read any other way. Maybe he’s changed his mind but that’s what he’s saying here. Let’s not argue about it."

But Muglia continued to argue.

Jackson took off his glasses and leaned forward, covering his face with

his hand.

‘‘No! Stop!" Jackson finally said, dropping his hand and lifting his head. ‘‘There is no question pending."

A witness may not speak unless a question is pending. That kind of explanation is supposed to occur when his own lawyer questions him. Later, a Microsoft lawyer did ask Muglia to explain the e-mail and the judge listened politely.

Time to Run Up the White Flag for MS?

Is it time to think the unthinkable?

Many antitrust specialists, who not long ago thought Microsoft would win its antitrust battle against the government, now believe it’s a lost cause.

"The government has shown beyond a doubt that Microsoft has engaged in exclusionary conduct. There’s absolutely no doubt about that," said University of Baltimore Professor Bob Lande.

"The government will win at the [U.S.] Supreme Court," he said, dismissing any chance for a successful appeal.

Despite the change in climate, Microsoft seems determined to fight it out to the bitter end. Alhough the software maker’s witnesses have been battered during their time on the stand, the company is not working behind the scenes to settle with the government before any sanctions are imposed -- at least for now.

"Could we settle? That would depend on Microsoft. But at this point, a lot of water is over the dam," a senior government official said, adding that Microsoft had not approached the U.S. Department of Justice in recent weeks to discuss settling.

"We said for the past year, we’re open to discussion with the government," spokesman Mark Murray said. "But the bottom line for Microsoft is protecting our ability to innovate and add new features for consumers."

Microsoft says no settlement talks have taken place since last May, when the government and 19 states filed the landmark antitrust case.

And even as company’s defense has collapsed in recent weeks, Microsoft’s lawyers maintain they will prevail, arguing that any discussion of proposed remedies is "wishful thinking" on the part of the government.

But many antitrust experts watching the way Microsoft has handled its defense believe the company has committed devastating errors.

Mark LeHocky, an antitrust attorney at Freeland, Cooper, LeHocky and Hamburg, in San Francisco noted that company executives made a mistake by denying the existence of anti-competitive practices that were later proven to be true -- putting the credibility of Microsoft’s entire defense into question.

The "gold-medal fiasco," as George Washington University law professor William Kovacic put it, was the videotape entered into evidence that

purported to demonstrate how the components of the Internet Explorer browser could not be removed without harming the overall Windows operating system.

But the videotape was fatally flawed -- the demo used multiple computers instead of a supposed single machine.

Beyond that, Microsoft witnesses have been forced into constant retreat. In one particularly embarrassing episode, Vice President James Allchin acknowledged that users could obtain 19 of the same benefits Microsoft associates did with the integration of the browser and operating system by simply purchasing the products separately.

"The case is going in the government's favor, unless Microsoft can pull a rabbit out of its hat," LeHocky said. "Rather than focusing on their best arguments, they've focused on everything under the sun."

Microsoft has argued that it didn't try to put rivals out of business. It says the decision to bundle Internet Explorer into the Windows operating system was not meant to ruin Netscape Communications Corp.

The company maintains that its version of Java was not meant to undermine Sun Microsystems Inc.'s Java language as the basis of a new computing industry programming platform.

What's more, the company rejects suggestions that it ever considered the browser to be a separate application.

In the end, however, experts say Microsoft would have been better off being blunt about the nature of competition. Something along the lines of: "We're tough competitors; and it's our duty to our shareholders to try and put the other guy out of business, through any legal means."

If the government prevails, it's unclear what might happen next. The court will need to steer a careful course between not doing enough -- leaving Microsoft largely unchecked -- and doing too much, leaving itself open to criticism that it's shackling a healthy capitalistic enterprise.

Several possible scenarios are under discussion -- from breaking up the company into several companies to opening up the operating system.

If nothing else, Microsoft will be forced to change its way of doing business. Antitrust experts generally agree that Microsoft's negotiating tactics will receive the most scrutiny.

Canadian Teen Battles Apple Over iMac Name

A Canadian high school student has found himself in a David and Goliath struggle with Apple Computer Inc. over his ownership of the domain name, appleimac.com.

Apple claims the site's name infringes on its trademark for its popular new computer, the iMac.

But instead of buckling under the pressure to hand over his domain name, 16-year-old Calgary student Abdul Traya wants to make a deal.

‘‘I want to give it to them (Apple). But, first, I’m looking for a lawyer," Traya told Reuters in an interview.

‘‘I’m starting to understand why they want it," Traya said, adding he wasn’t looking for trouble when he registered the name for $150 just after Apple announced their new translucent all-in-one computer.

Last week, the teenager was sent a stern letter through Apple’s U.S. law firm, Fenwick & West LLP, demanding he relinquish the domain name registered for the Web site business, Traya Net Inc.

Traya’s business hosts about 130 Web sites on two servers, which are located in the basement of his parent’s Calgary home.

‘‘We just wanted to draw people to the site, to test it out," he explained.

Apple isn’t taking it lightly. In their letter to Traya they say he committed an act of ‘‘blatant cyberpiracy".

‘‘Obviously, Traya Net obtained the domain hoping to trade off the tremendous goodwill represented by Apple’s company name and its Apple and iMac trademarks," the letter stated.

The law firm also requested the Grade 11 student simply transfer the domain name to Apple by signing an agreement they enclosed. He was to get it notarized and send it back to California.

Apple’s lawyers were not immediately available for comment.

Traya has been inundated with encouraging calls and e-mails from supporters who urge him to use whatever leverage he has.

‘‘I think I’m only 16 and they’re so large...people are saying that it wouldn’t look good for them to take me court."

Traya now hopes to exchange the name for something "useful" like computers for his school.

He said the experience hasn’t been all bad.

In the week since he received the letter, he’s had about half a million visitors to his site compared with only 200 visitors since it was posted.

Despite, Apple’s tough stance, Traya is still optimistic an amicable working relationship can be created.

‘‘I’m not against Apple, I want to work with them."

’Cybersquatters’ Ordered To Surrender

A federal judge has ordered two South Texas men to turn over 11 Internet domain names to Microsoft Corp.

Microsoft filed suit in December against Kurtis K. Karr and Kenny Brewer, who live in La Feria, Texas, a town of 3,400 people about 10

miles west of Harlingen in the Rio Grande Valley.

The ruling was handed down earlier this month by U.S. District Judge Melinda Harmon, the Houston Chronicle reported today. The judge also issued an injunction barring Karr and Brewer from using the Microsoft names again.

The lawsuit alleged that the two men were infringing on trademarks for popular products by the world’s largest software maker and were misleading the public.

No punitive damages were awarded. Ronald Secrest, Microsoft’s Houston attorney, said the transfer of the valuable Microsoft domain names is payment enough.

‘‘The main lesson to be learned is that the trade names that are important to Microsoft and others have been recognized as valuable and cannot be taken and misappropriated by others," Secrest said.

Among the Internet domain names registered by Karr, a recreational vehicle dealer, and Brewer, a fishing guide, were microsoftwindows.com and microsoftoffice.com.

The lawsuit in federal court described the men as ‘‘pirates" and ‘‘cybersquatters."

Microsoft says the men have registered dozens of famous brand names, including AssociatedPress.net, travelersinsurance.com, and packard-bell.com.

Karr’s attorney, Curtis Bonner, told the Houston Chronicle that Karr has decided to get out of the domain name business.

‘‘We were just glad to conclude the problem and get on with our lives," Bonner said. ‘‘It’s not a lot of fun fighting Microsoft, as the U.S. government will tell you."

Microsoft spokesman Adam Sohn said the company offered Karr and Brewer a modest settlement, as it has done in similar cases, Sohn said, but nothing could be worked out.

Sohn said it cost around $100 to register a domain name, but the Texas men wanted Microsoft to pay them much more.

Va. Bill Targets Some ‘Junk’ E-Mail

Virginia is making criminals out of flagrant junk e-mailers with a new law to protect computer users from getting ‘‘spammed" with pitches for weight-loss plans, get-rich-quick schemes and pornography.

The legislation passed Tuesday makes Virginia the fourth state in the country to pass an anti-spamming law and 18 others are considering them, said the National Conference of State Legislatures. Like Virginia, California’s law allows for the jailing of some spammers while laws in Washington and Nevada impose civil fines.

Among those seeking the law - and its biggest beneficiary - was America

Online, the Virginia-based company whose 16 million subscribers around the country make it the biggest Internet service provider.

The legislation would cover junk e-mail sent through any Internet service provider based in Virginia, meaning that AOL could use the law against spammers from other states who bombard its subscribers. And, the measure protects Virginia Internet service providers such as AOL from being sued by computer users who receive spam.

‘‘This law gives us more tools to use in the fight against spam," said Randall Boe, associate general counsel for AOL, which already has sued more than 40 individuals and companies to stop junk e-mail and collect damages.

But civil libertarians say Virginia and other states are rushing to unconstitutionally curtail commercial free speech on the Internet.

‘‘It is simply too early in the life of the Internet to begin creating restrictions of this kind," said Kent Willis, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Virginia. ‘‘It’s clumsy, it’s broad, it’s vague. It clearly infringes on free speech rights."

The law makes it a misdemeanor for a spammer to use a false online identity to send mass e-mailings - as many do. The maximum penalty would be a $500 fine.

If the spam was deemed ‘‘malicious" and results in more than $2,500 in damage to the victim, the crime would be a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison. An example of such damage might be the case of a business whose computers crashed, causing it to lose customers.

The legislation also allows civil penalties against spammers ranging from $10 per message to $25,000 per day.

Boe said AOL sought the legislation in part so it could collect more damages in civil court. ‘‘This law significantly ups the ante," he said.

Willis, of the ACLU, said courts have generally thrown out restrictions on commercial pitches through the mail. ‘‘Spamming is simply the Internet version of direct mail," he said.

However, he acknowledged that courts have upheld restrictions on unsolicited faxes.

AOL’s Boe pointed out that direct mailers pay for postage while spammers pay virtually nothing to use the Internet.

Instead, the Internet service provider pays the cost of distributing the spam and the computer user pays for the online time it takes to check e-mail, he said.

Russell Beck, a Boston lawyer who concentrates on high-technology issues, said the spammers will not be deterred unless they face costly penalties such as those in the Virginia bill.

‘‘This sounds like the toughest law and it’s a good trend if it continues," he said.

USA Plan To Buy Lycos in Jeopardy

USA Networks Inc.’s plans to buy Web gateway Lycos Inc. appeared in jeopardy as Lycos’ largest shareholder started waivering in its support of the $22 billion deal because of a sharp decline in Lycos’ stock price.

CMGI Inc., a venture capital firm that owns 20 percent of Lycos, said it wouldn’t vote for the deal if Lycos’ stock price didn’t recover from its two-day, 31 percent drop.

USA Networks wants to forge a three-way deal, merging its cable television network with Lycos, which provides Internet search and information services, and Ticketmaster Online Citysearch, an online seller of tickets to concerts and other events.

CMGI’s original statement in support of the deal was drowned out by sell-orders from other investors in Lycos and Ticketmaster who felt they were getting a raw deal.

Lycos’ shares, which fell from $127.25 to $87 in two days, got a boost Thursday from speculation that the deal would either be scrapped or sweetened. Lycos shares rose 18 percent to close at $103.25 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

Ticketmaster shares, which had fallen 35 percent to $37.50 in the two-day selloff, recovered slightly on Thursday, closing at $39.371/2.

Some credited the stocks’ partial rebound on bullish analysts hawking the virtues of the deal.

Canada’s Corel Labors Under Adobe Takeover Suspicion

Canadian software creator Corel Corp. denied rampant reports on Wednesday that it was in merger talks with Adobe Systems Inc., the largest maker of digital publishing software.

Corel’s Chief Financial Officer, Michael O’Reilly, said the Ottawa-based firm in the word processing software market, was not in a mating dance with San Jose, Calif.-based Adobe. "We’ve never talked to them because they’ve never approached us in any way," O’Reilly told Reuters. "Are we aware of a planned or proposed takeover bid? The answer is no, not by Adobe or anyone else."

CompuServe Gets a Makeover

CompuServe has unveiled a multimillion dollar marketing push with user-friendly software, flashier features and lower prices as it attempts to stage a comeback with the help of parent America Online.

CompuServe, a pioneering online service that was eventually taken over by former rival AOL, hopes to attract a broader group of members such as small business owners but maintain its unique identity.

AOL wants to keep CompuServe a distinct, more elite service - part of a broader strategy of nurturing the businesses it acquires as niche brands for specific customers.

‘‘What AOL is trying to do is get beyond their traditional subscriber base, and get into a market that’s a bit more sophisticated," said Zia Daniell Wigder, an analyst with Jupiter Communications.

CompuServe had carved out a niche serving businesses, professional people and experienced cyberspace users.

With users finding more convenient ways online, CompuServe’s subscriber base has fallen from about 2.6 million to 2 million since it was taken over by AOL as part of a three-way deal with H&R Block and WorldCom in January 1998.

To revive itself, CompuServe said Monday it plans to mail out diskettes of its software upgrade, which supports higher-speed modem connections and is easier for users to install and customize on their personal computers.

But the mailing will be targeted more to business professionals, a sharp contrast with the ‘‘carpet" mailings of millions of diskettes AOL is known for.

New subscribers will see a ‘‘Main Menu" screen with a continuously updated news ticker featuring headlines from The Associated Press, market analysis from CBSMarketWatch.com and personalized news folders - more sophisticated offerings than AOL members get.

But other features will become more like AOL’s.

CompuServe’s e-mail will be modeled after the easier-to-use version that helped AOL become the world’s leading online service with more than 16 million subscribers.

And subscribers will be given simpler user names, and the domain name will be shortened from ‘‘compuserve.com" to ‘‘cs.com."

Under a new pricing plan, members would pay just $9.95 a month for 20 hours of online access, with each additional hour billed at less than 5 cents a minute. The offer will last for several months, depending on how many people sign up. CompuServe has been charging existing members $9.95 a month for five hours of use, with each extra hour costing $2.95.

In addition, CompuServe is cutting the cost of unlimited access from $24.95 to $19.95 a month. But CompuServe officials downplayed this offer, saying that 80 percent of their online users choose limited access.

AOL hopes to charge advertisers a premium for targeting upscale CompuServe users, who may have more money to spend on a new computer or other big-ticket items than AOL users who may explore chat rooms for hours.

‘‘When you go down and sit down to talk to advertisers about CompuServe, they really see it as a dream audience," CompuServe chief operating officer Audrey Weil said. But, she added, CompuServe will offer discounts to advertisers to try to get them to try marketing through

CompuServe.

AOL has enjoyed some success with its strategy of snapping up companies with distinct identities and keeping their images distinct.

Last June, AOL bought the ICQ Web site and its instant messaging software, which alerts users when their friends are on the Web and lets them chat and send files directly to other users' computer desktops.

Despite concerns that ICQ users, the technology-elite, would flee AOL, ICQ last month said membership nearly doubled since the acquisition.

AOL says it will employ the same strategy when it completes its acquisition of Netscape Communications, the pioneer of Internet browser software. Netscape will keep its headquarters in Mountain View, Calif. and maintain a separate workforce.

CompuServe, too, retains it original headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, and much of its staff. Whether AOL succeeds in reviving it will be another key test of an AOL strategy that resembles cable television, with each channel targeting a different audience.

Or, as Weil said, ''Think of AOL like the USA Today newspaper. CompuServe is a little bit like the New York Times. It's a more serious newspaper."

Intel To Launch Pentium III On Feb. 26

U.S. microprocessor group Intel Corp. will officially launch its new Pentium III product on Feb. 26 following a big Feb. 17 preview event in San Jose, Calif.

An Intel spokeswoman said Thursday that after the launch date computer manufacturers would have PCs with Pentium III available for sale.

She added that Intel had not yet decided on the pricing of the Pentium III but that it should be the mainstream product of the company by the end of 1999.

The Pentium III will be launched with clock rates of 450 to 500 megahertz. Intel aims to boost the clock rates of its products to one gigahertz, but the spokeswoman said it was not sure whether this would be a Pentium III version or another product.

Intel Unveils Controversial Chip

Intel Corp. is currently showcasing more than 200 new games, business systems and Internet sites to promote its controversial new computer chip that has been drawing criticism for its ability to send the serial number of an individual computer through the World Wide Web.

Reporters and industry analysts gathered in San Jose Wednesday to preview software and other products designed for Intel Corp.'s Pentium III microprocessor, available in personal computers at the end of

February. The event was part of a $300 million marketing campaign for the Pentium III, which will supply the brainpower for personal computers initially costing about $2,000.

AMD To Offer New Processor As Intel Battle Heats Up

Computer-chip maker Advanced Micro Devices Inc. plans to unveil Monday a new microprocessor that it hopes will enable it to compete with rival Intel Corp. in the more expensive sector of the personal computer market.

AMD will introduce the next member of its K-6 processor family -- the brain chips for PCs -- with the K6-3 chip, a product it hopes will compete with Intel's soon-to-be released Pentium III, targeted at both consumers and corporate users.

Already bruised from price wars with Intel, AMD is hoping to improve its profits and market share by targeting the higher end of the PC market with the K6-3, instead of the sub-$1,000 sector where its chips have found a big niche.

Two weeks ago, AMD said that it would likely post an operating loss in the first quarter, due to Intel's aggressive price-cutting in the low-cost PC market.

''AMD is going to attempt to position the K6-3 against the Pentium III, but it's going to be tough," said Hans Mosesman, an analyst with Prudential Securities. ''They will probably end up getting positioned against the Celeron." Celeron is Intel's family of chips targeted to the low-cost PC market.

While AMD had a technological lead over Intel with the previous iteration, the K6-2 processor and its 3DNow technology, Intel has caught up to AMD's three dimensional graphics features with the Pentium III and its new instruction set, previously code-named Katmai.

''PC makers have been willing to use AMD chips only in the low-cost areas," said Linley Gwennap, editor of the Microprocessor Report. ''So, with the K6-3, AMD is going to try to get out of competing against Celeron and go against the more expensive chips ... If they can pull this off, it would be a big financial success for them."

Typically, AMD, a long-time rival of Intel, offers its processors at a 25 percent discount to Intel. In the past year, it has gained market share in the lower-end of the PC market, where PC makers are looking for the lowest-cost parts to make some profits from systems that cost $1,000 and less.

But AMD's reputation has been tarnished with PC makers, investors and analysts because it has had production problems in the past as it transitioned to new technologies or faster chip speeds. Monday, the K6-3 will be launched at speeds of 400 and 450 megahertz, analysts said, with 500 coming later.

An spokesman for AMD, which is based in Sunnyvale, Calif., confirmed that its K6-3 will be launched Monday, but technical details were not yet available.

Late Friday, AMD got a big boost from Gateway Inc., the personal computer direct maketer in North Sioux City, S.D., which previously has used only Intel chips. Gateway announced it would use AMD processors as a secondary supply to Intel, although Intel processors will still dominate its products.

‘‘It is a big psychological shot in the arm for AMD," said Lou Mazzucchelli, an analyst with Gerard Klauer Mattison & Co. "It’s a vote of confidence that AMD can deliver in volume."

Gateway officials did not return calls seeking comment about what kind of PCs they planned to use AMD processors in, but analysts speculated Gateway is hoping to offer even lower-cost PCs with the less costly AMD components.

Gwennap of The Microprocessor Report said AMD will try to sell its K6-3 chips at its highest prices yet, and that PC makers may end up paying $200 to $300 per processor. Currently, AMD’s most expensive processor goes for about $130, he said.

‘‘I think it’s going to take some time for this to really work because they are changing their positioning and there is not a whole lot of technology to help them make this change," Gwennap said. ‘‘There is an image thing here where PC makers see AMD as supplying low-end chips and it is going to take some time to change that image."

Ashok Kumar, a Piper Jaffray analyst, was not quite so optimistic.

‘‘It’s not realistic to compare (the K6-3) to the Pentium III," Kumar said. ‘‘They can try all they want but what I’ve heard from PC OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) is that it’s going to be against the Celeron."

NEC To Cut 15,000 Jobs

NEC Corp., Japan’s biggest computer maker, will cut 15,000 jobs, or nearly 10 percent of its work force, over three years as it struggles to recover from slumping sales and massive losses at its Packard Bell unit in the United States.

About 6,000 of the job cuts are outside Japan; the company did not say how many will hit its 7,000 U.S. workers.

The downsizing, disclosed on Friday, was the latest corporate fallout from the spreading economic crisis in Asia. But NEC’s woes also were tied to problems endemic to its U.S. unit, which has been hammered by price-cutting wars with U.S.-based makers of personal computers.

NEC is one of the world’s biggest technology companies, with products ranging from laptop computers to cellular phones to fiber optic networks. It expects to lose up to $1.25 billion this year amid the Asian slump, a prolonged recession in Japan and a rising yen, which pushes up the price of Japanese products sold abroad.

To cope with the losses, NEC will slash executives’ salaries by up to 20 percent, trim capital spending by a fifth, and cut its research and

development budget by 10 percent. NEC will also sell real estate to pay off debt.

Much of the damage flows from red ink outside Japan. The Packard Bell division, based in Sacramento, Calif., lost $500 million last year as its share of U.S. PC sales dropped to 7.1 percent from 9.4 percent in 1997, according to the Dataquest research firm.

The drop was sparked by a rush of competitors to sell inexpensive PCs, a category Packard Bell traditionally has dominated.

‘‘When they were in the marketplace a few years ago they were the leading brand in that market and there wasn’t much competition," Dataquest analyst Charles Smulders said.

‘‘Now, IBM, Compaq, Hewlett-Packard are all in that market."

As part of the restructuring, NEC will separate the profitable European subsidiary of Packard Bell NEC from its loss-making U.S. division, putting the European unit under direct control of the NEC parent company.

In addition, NEC president Hisashi Kaneko will step down, though he denied his resignation was an admission of responsibility for the poor performance. Koji Nishigaki, currently a managing director, will take over as president on March 26.

NEC’s loss, which comes to 150 billion yen, is far more than its previous forecast of a net loss of 35 billion yen, or $292 million. NEC earned 40.51 billion yen last year.

NEC and its 130 subsidiaries employ 155,000 people worldwide.

The company said Packard Bell NEC is expected to post an $80 million loss before taxes this fiscal year, but predicted the division will earn a profit in 2000.

In other Asian fallout on Friday, Toshiba Corp. said a rising yen and a slump in sales hurt earnings.

Toshiba said it expects a net loss of 20 billion yen, or $167 million, this year for its parent company, compared to an earlier estimate of a profit of 12 billion yen, or $100 million.

The loss would be the first in 48 years for the parent company, which doesn’t include Toshiba’s subsidiaries.

Medical Records Posted on Web

Several thousand patient records at the University of Michigan Medical Center inadvertently lingered on public Internet sites for two months.

‘‘Luckily, we were notified and able to stop it this time before real damage was done," spokesman Dave Wilkins said. ‘‘Still, on all fronts, we’re taking it very seriously."

The problem was discovered Monday when a university student searching

for information about a doctor on the medical center’s Web site was linked to files containing private patient records.

The records contained names, addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, employment status, treatments for specific medical conditions and other data. The information was used to schedule appointments, Wilkins said.

No one accessed the records until Monday, he said.

‘‘I’m certainly not happy about it," said Cary Johnson, a nurse at the medical center whose 2-year-old son’s record was exposed. ‘‘I guess technology is helping us to do some things and hurting us in other ways."

U.S. Unveils Ergonomics Plan To Combat Job Injuries

The U.S. workplace safety agency Friday unveiled America’s first proposed standards for ergonomics -- the way workers physically fit their jobs -- and drew instant opposition from business groups.

The draft ergonomics standards address such modern work-related ills as the repetitive strain injury common among computer operators and cashiers, and other repeated-motion injuries suffered by meat-cutters and factory workers.

Such ailments cause more than 600,000 lost workdays each year in the United States, accounting for about one-third of the days U.S. workers call in sick, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

‘‘Behind the numbers ... are real people, real pain, real problems, in some cases crippling disabilities," OSHA chief Charles Jeffress told a news conference. ‘‘They can’t brush their hair, they can’t hold a cup, they can’t change their baby’s diaper."

Manufacturing jobs and jobs where employees handle materials -- ranging from nursing home workers who routinely lift patients to industrial workers in some factories -- are the main targets of the draft standards, Jeffress said.

But other workers, including those who work at computers or use other keyboards, would have to complain of an ergonomic-related injury before the federal standards would come into play.

Agricultural, maritime and construction workers would not be covered.

Solutions to ergonomic problems on the job need not be elaborate -- Jeffress gave the example of a short factory worker standing on a box on a production line to alleviate shoulder pain from repeatedly reaching up -- but they can be initially expensive.

‘‘There will be significant cost involved for employers," Jeffress said, but added, ‘‘They’ll pay much less than what they’re currently paying for workers’ compensation and the cost of injuries and illnesses."

Over the long run, though, Jeffress said employers would reap benefits similar to programs for health and safety in the workplace, which he said return four dollars for every dollar invested.

But the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which represents more than three million American businesses, said the rules as drafted would be a crushing burden to employers.

‘‘This hopelessly vague draft is a blank check to OSHA inspectors," the chamber’s Peter Eide said in a statement. ‘‘It would require all American businesses to become full-time experts in ergonomics, a field for which there is little if any credible evidence."

David Farmer, of the Alliance of American Insurers, which underwrites many workers compensation policies, said the draft rules lacked scientific foundation.

‘‘This proposed rule, we think, is based on inadequate research and is premature," Farmer said by telephone. ‘‘The whole issue of injuries, particularly musculoskeletal injury, needs a lot further research before you implement such sweeping changes ... that can add significant cost to the employer."

John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO labor group, gave strong support to the draft ergonomics standards, but in a statement voiced concern that many workplaces would be covered only after an employee was injured.

On Capitol Hill, Rep. Cass Ballender, a North Carolina Republican who chairs a House panel on workplace protection, called the draft plan ‘‘ill-conceived" and said House Republicans would ‘‘vigorously fight proposed federal ergonomics regulations until there is sound research in this area."

Congressional Republicans have repeatedly prevented OSHA from putting together rules on this subject.

The standards, if adopted in their current form, would cover some two million American workplaces out of the total six million. However, substantial revisions are expected before the rules are in place, which could happen by late 2000, Jeffress said.

Update: Linux May Be Threat to Microsoft

Linux may sound more like a "Peanuts" cartoon character than a serious operating system for business computers. But fast-growing demand for the free software may signal an important new threat to Microsoft.

In the latest sign of acceptance, IBM announced plans Thursday to start selling powerful business computers that come pre-loaded with Linux, a version of the Unix operating system that is used by companies for tasks such as running networks of smaller computers. The move was viewed a major endorsement of the fledgling software and comes after similar moves by Compaq Computer Corp., Dell Computer Corp., Hewlett-Packard Co. and Silicon Graphics Inc.

MacWorld Won’t Return to Boston

The popular MacWorld computer trade show won’t be returning to Boston, costing the city millions of dollars in lost tourism revenue, organizers said Tuesday.

A fixture in Boston for nearly 15 years, the trade show relocated to New York last summer after outgrowing Boston’s hotel and convention space. After the New York convention, organizers said they would return to Boston in 1999. But organizers have since decided on July 21-23 at New York’s Jacob Javits Center to keep the show under one roof, which isn’t possible in Boston.

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